TRACING THE RED THREAD: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CHINESE-U.S. TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION

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The 1990s witnessed a sudden, dramatic increase in the number of adoptions of Chinese children, 95% of whom are girls, by U.S. parents. Currently, more foreign-born children are adopted from China than any other country. These adoptions, the resulting gendered migration from China to the United States and the children who remain in Chinese social welfare institutes, serve as the basis for this research.

This dissertation is based on nearly three years of multi-sited ethnographic research. Initially, I conducted fieldwork with parents and staff in adoption agencies and support groups in Pittsburgh. Subsequently, I accompanied a group of parents on their adoption trip to China. Finally, I conducted research in China; this phase involved extensive participant observation with volunteer groups, in local hospitals, and with international aid organizations that are working with Chinese social welfare institutes and providing funding and medical care to resident children. As a volunteer for these groups, I worked in a variety of sites in both Northern and Southern China (Beijing, Tianjin, Henan Province, and Guangzhou) that illustrated important regional differences.

In China, red threads, in wall-hangings and ornaments, have distinctly auspicious meanings and are quite literally woven throughout the fabric of Chinese daily life and rituals. This imagery has become central to the U.S. community of families with children from China. However, the complex and shifting meanings associated with this imagery as it migrates from

China to the United States through the process of adoption are not readily apparent and key questions arise. How did U.S. adopting parents come to know this story? How is the folklore associated with the red thread used by adoption agencies and others to advertise and promote adoption? How does the red thread come to represent bonds between adopting parent and child and also between adoption communities in the U.S. and China? In answering these questions, I explore three key aspects of the transnational adoption process: 1) adoptive families and cultural identity; 2) gender, race and citizenship; and 3) adoption and labor in China.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS X

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 WHAT IS TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION? 1

1.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION 3

1.3 THE CHINESE SIDE 5

1.4 FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY 8

1.5 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW 11

1.5.1 Kinship and the Family: The Enduring Relevance of Kinship Studies . 12

1.5.2 Reproduction and the State: Conceptions of Modernity 17

1.5.3 Transnationalism and Identity: The Global and the Local 23

1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW 27

1.6.1 Adoptive Families and Cultural Identity 27

1.6.2 Gender, Race and Citizenship 28

1.6.3 Adoption and Labor in China 29

1.7 CONCLUSION 30

2.0 BUILDING FAMILIES HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD 32

2.1 OVERVIEW 32

2.2 BACKGROUND: U.S. PARENTS AND ADOPTION TRAVEL 35

2.3 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES……..37

2.4 THE BIRTH OF A FAMILY: HOW DO I IMAGINE ADOPTION? 41

2.5 TRAVELING 45

2.6 CHINESE PERCEPTIONS: *"XINGFU!"* 46

2.7 NEGOTIATING SPACE AND THE REPRODUCTION OF CULTURE: HOW WILL MY FAMILY RELATE TO CHINA?..... 48

2.8 CONCLUSION 52

3.0 VIRTUALLY CHINESE..... 54

3.1 OVERVIEW..... 54

3.2 THE SCATTERING OF SEEDS: TRANSNATIONALISM, DIASPORA AND "CHINESENESS" 55

3.3 THE KOREAN MODEL 59

3.4 FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS & CULTURAL IDENTITY 63

3.5 PURCHASING "NORMAL" 69

3.6 LOST DAUGHTERS – "FOUND" 72

3.7 VIRTUAL SPACE..... 75

3.8 CONCLUSION 78

4.0 INTERSECTING CHILDHOODS: GENDER, RACE AND CITIZENSHIP..... 81

4.1 BACKGROUND..... 83

4.2 CHINESE-U.S. MIGRATION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE..... 85

4.3 CHINESE FEMININITIES..... 89

4.4 CHINA "DOLLS" AND "LOST DAUGHTERS": PACKAGING FEMININITY (U.S. IMAGES) 90

4.5 "LOST SONS" 97

4.6 SONS, DAUGHTERS AND THE CHANGING VALUE OF CHILDREN 100

4.7 CONTEMPORARY U.S. AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOPTEES 106

4.8 CONCLUSION 108

5.0 SAVING CHILDREN BODY AND SOUL 110

5.1 SALVATION NARRATIVES 112

5.2 "ORPHAN" RELIEF NGOS IN CHINA – WHO ARE THEY? 113

5.3 FANGJIAN 128

5.4 AEHF – AMERICAN EDUCATION AND HEALTH FOUNDATION 131

5.5 BY ANY OTHER NAME 137

5.6 CONCLUSION 141

6.0 LABOR OR LOVE 143

6.1 GLOBAL CARE WORK: AN OVERVIEW 149

6.2 MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTES 152

6.3 A TALE OF TWO SWIS 154

6.4 CHINESE SWI WORKERS: TO LABOR OR LOVE? 158

6.5 EXCHANGING CHILDREN 165

6.6 CONCLUSION 168

7.0 CONCLUSION 170

7.1 AFTERWORD 170

7.2 CONSPICUOUS FAMILIES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE 173

7.3 ASIAN FEMININITY 175

7.4 RACED IMAGES 176

7.5 INTERSECTIONS 178

7.6 SALVATION..... 181

7.7 LABOR OR LOVE..... 182

APPENDIX..... 188

BIBLIOGRAPHY 188

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Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful family, especially my parents, Arthur and Lois Cohen, and let them know (in writing) that this dissertation is finished!

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION?

> Chinese folklore says, "When a child is born, invisible red threads reach out from a child's spirit and connect it to all important people who will enter the child's life. As the child grows, the threads shorten, bringing closer those people who are destined to be together."
>
> -Story printed on the backside of "red thread girl" note cards sold under adoption items at www.chinasprout.com

In China, red thread, in the form of bracelets, wall-hangings and ornaments, has a distinctly auspicious meaning and is quite literally woven throughout the fabric of Chinese daily life and rituals. Consequently, it is not surprising that the notion of red thread has also been incorporated into the community of families with children from China, all of whom have experienced at least two weeks of travel in the People's Republic of China. However, the complex and shifting meanings associated with the red thread imagery as it migrates from China to the United States through the process of adoption are not readily apparent and key questions arise. How did U.S. adopting parents come to know this story? How did the meaning of the thread change with the community? How is this sample of "ancient Chinese folklore" (www.carolinescollection.safeshopper.com) used to promote, encourage and potentially

commodify adoption through the consumption of red thread items? And how does it reflect ideals of bonds not only between adopting parent and child but also between adoption communities in the United States and China?

While the red thread saying, *jian hong xian*（见红线）or "meeting by red thread" in Mandarin, is perhaps a timeless image in China, it is most often associated with a Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) proverb known as *hong sheng ji zu* （红绳系足）or "feet linked by red cords." This proverb tells the tale of the old man in the moon who acts as matchmaker and unites destined couples by tying their feet together with a red thread. This union is often arranged over long distances and despite the objections of others. Given the history of arranged marriage in China, this image is not light-hearted or necessarily romantic. And yet, red thread consumer items abound as part of the packaging of Chinese-U.S. adoption experiences. Many of these items are designed with children in mind and are especially cute and appealing.

Over the last ten years, this image has become a powerful metaphor within the adoption community of parents who have adopted from China. Red thread images are widely available through products sold by agencies, support groups, publishers and others serving the adoption community in the United States. In addition, these products have proliferated dramatically as the number of Chinese-United States adoptions increased from a mere dozen in 1988 to over 3,300 in 1996 and to 7,044 in 2004. In fact, currently, more foreign born children are adopted from China than any other country.[1]

[1]According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (http://travel.state.gov/family/adopted/stats/stats_451.html), 7,044 children were adopted from the Chinese Mainland by U.S. citizens, the most from any single nation. Of the 22,884 children adopted worldwide by U.S. parents, the second highest number, 5,865, were from Russia.

1.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Following the end of World War II, parents in the United States began adopting foreign children orphaned by the war. Although the bulk of these children were from war-ravaged countries in Western Europe, from 1948-1953, 2,418 children were adopted from Asian countries and roughly two-thirds of those children were Japanese (Pertman 2000:54). Consequently, this period marked a turning point in adoption trends, with adoptive parents beginning to reach across perceived racial and cultural boundaries. It was not until after the end of the Korean War, however, that the institution of "intercountry" adoption was formally established by an Oregon businessman named Harry Holt. Holt and his wife adopted eight Korean children and founded the first international adoption agency. Holt International remains one of the largest international agencies, with connections in several countries in addition to Korea (Holt personal communication, March 9, 2003).

Pertman argues that, the rate of cross-border adoption is related to the economic and social conditions of a country. "When things are going well, very little cross-border adoption takes place; when the outflow increases, it's a pretty strong hint that something's gone wrong" (Pertman 2000:54). Adoption from Korea is a good example of this. From the 1950s through the 1980s, Korea was the country "sending" the largest number of children to be placed for intercountry adoption. Korea's orphaned population was the result not only of the devastation of war but also of the stigmatized and abandoned offspring born out of wedlock to Korean women and U.S. soldiers. Subsequent waves of intercountry adoption had problematic origins as well. Pertman also states that when a country begins to recover, it typically reduces or eliminates intercountry adoption because "for good reasons and bad, ranging from reflexive nationalism to personal pride to the need for sustaining human resources, countries don't like to give up their

children any more than parents do" (Pertman 2000:54). However, while Pertman correctly sees that the occurrence of cross-border adoption is strongly related to social or economic problems, he does not acknowledge that the cessation of this form of adoption does not necessarily indicate a cessation of the larger socioeconomic problems at hand. For example, Korean adoptions were temporarily halted in the 1990s because of politicized North Korean allegations that the South Korean government was corrupt and was "selling" Korean children to the West. Also, while South Korea's economy has grown considerably, as of 2006, it still has a large number of children available for both foreign and domestic adoption. Pertman and others also do not address the ways in which U.S. families and agencies are also sending children to other countries for adoption (see Chapter 4, Intersecting Childhoods for details*)*.

Chinese-U.S. adoptions are a relatively recent phenomena but one that has grown markedly throughout the 1990s and, at least in part, in response to the curtailment of Korean-U.S. adoptions. In 1988, the United States government reported that only twelve orphan visas were issued to Chinese children; by 2001 that number had climbed to 4,681 and, in 2005, it peaked at 7,906 (http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/adoption.html). The increase in the number of these adoptions is not surprising given the stable history of intercountry adoption in the United States and the increasing degrees of globalization in contemporary society as a whole. However, given the recent and rapid increase in transnational adoptions between China and the United States, broader contemporary concerns with race and immigration laws and procedures, and strong economic ties between the two nations, the complex network of global social and governmental ties and the broader sociocultural implications demand further examination.

1.3 THE CHINESE SIDE

In 1978, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China sought to recover from the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and began a new era of economic and political reform marked by the institution of two new policies: the "Open Door" policy (*gaige kaifang*, 改革开放) and the "Four Modernizations" policy (*sige xiandaihua*, 四个现代化). These policies formally opened China to trade relationships with the West and domestic development programs were begun in five coastal Special Economic Zones and a series of coastal cities (e.g. Dalian, Shanghai, Tianjin and Shenzhen) designated as "open cities" contained economic development zones. Concurrently, the state also determined that a modern economy was contingent upon contained population growth and thus introduced the birth planning policies in conjunction with the "Open Door" and "Four Modernizations" economic policies (Greenhalgh 1990, White 1994). While fertility limits had been discussed in earlier private government sessions, the state's public call for drastically limited fertility was not announced until an "Open Letter" was published in 1980 asking Youth and Party League members to have only one child (Greenhalgh, 1990). The so called "one-child policy,"[2] *du sheng zi nu* (独生子女), has promoted the idea of "modern families" with one birth -- regardless of the child's sex. This is a sharp contrast to both pre-Communist Chinese values and the goals of Mao Zedong and the state (prior to 1978) who espoused the belief that China's strength was based on a population built of large families (Harrell 1985; Greenhalgh 1994; Anagnost 1995; Huang 1998).

[2] Although the term "One Child Policy" is actually a misnomer that does not reflect considerable complexity in regulation, I use the term because of its wide acceptance in popular usage in the United States.

Ultimately, the policy evolved into a series of policies that were more complicated than the term “one-child” policy implies. The term “one-child” is a misnomer because the policy is really aimed at curtailing the number of pregnancies. For example, the birth of twins are largely seen as a happy circumstance assuming one or both are boys, or the parents are open to not having a son. Unlike other occurrences of child abandonment, it is very often the pregnancy that is “illegal” and so the State offers assistance only in terminating the pregnancy. Consequently, a continuation of the pregnancy in violation of this policy may lead to abandonment, especially in cases where the child is considered “undesirable” due to gender or health concerns. In many other cases of child abandonment (e.g. Kertzer 1993, Kligman 1995, Bargach 2002), the State (or Church) intervenes to “protect” the fetus. This pronatal policies may also lead to abandonment in cases of “honor” (e.g. unwed mothers) or poverty.

Although foreigners typically think of the policy as one enacted by a monolithic state, the policies, while guided by Beijing, are often regional in nature. There are differences across provinces and distinctions made between rural and urban populations and between Han Chinese and minority populations, *shao shu min zhu* (少数民族). The blanket policy of “basic reproductive demands,” *jiben[shengyu] yaoqiu*(基本生育要求)includes restrictions such as *wanhun, wanyu, shaosheng, yousheng* (晚婚晚育少生优生), or “late marriage, late childbearing, few births and eugenic births,” and the 1980 Marriage Law, which stipulates that all married couples must practice effective contraception (there is variance in methods) and must abort any “unauthorized” pregnancies (Greenhalgh,1990). In 1999, significant revisions were made to birth-planning policies, including a provision allowing (even urban) couples to legally adopt a second child, but the broad goals of state-mandated birth planning and development remained intact and are widely implicated in the increased rate of abandoned children throughout the

1980s and 1990s (e.g. Greenhalgh 1994; Anagnost 1995; Handwerker 1995; Johnson 1998; Skinner 1998). The vast majority of Chinese children placed for transnational adoption are female, and most come from the southeastern provinces of China, such as Guangdong and Fujian, regions that have a long history of overseas immigration (Wolf & Huang 1980).

Although the so called One Child policy has met with a high degree of acceptance among urban families, rural families remain more likely to reject the "modern" one-child family and the constraints that family planning policy places on their likelihood of producing sons; at least one male offspring is often still considered necessary to maintain the family (Anagnost 1995; Johnson 1998; Skinner 1998). The relatively large population of abandoned girls may be seen as a reflection of this well-known and long standing Chinese cultural preference for boys, a view that many assert persists, especially among China's rural majority. Given the pressure for families to produce fewer children, and the continued importance of sons for rural families, placing unwanted girls or disabled boys in orphanages can be seen as a strategy for adhering to the smaller family policy, while simultaneously advocating their perceived need for healthy sons. Giving a child up for adoption may allow the family to avoid penalties for exceeding the limit, or provide them with the option to try again for a son. From this vantage point, transnational adoption may be seen as an ideal means of providing homes for orphaned children.

It is important to note here that this research addresses formal adoption where the child is declared *legally* abandoned and placed in an institution as a ward of the state. Chinese families have a long history of practicing informal adoption whereby a child who can not remain with his or her biological parents is placed with a member of the extended family (Wolf and Huang 1980). Given the nature of contemporary birth planning policies that, until recently, also limited the number of adoptive children in a family, informally placing children with members of the

extended family has also become more complicated. For example, without clear legal standing and a State approved adoption certificate, families may be unable to place their child in public school or obtain other social services in their name.

With regard to terminology, whenever possible, I will avoid the word "orphanage," although it is commonly used in English to convey the situation of resident children who have been legally declared orphans either because of death or abandonment. Instead, I use the translation of the official Chinese government term for these homes, social welfare institutes (*fuliyuan*, 福利院*)*. Hereafter, I will refer to them as SWI. This term not only accurately conveys the situation of resident children but also avoids the stigma and Dickensian imagery so often connected with the term orphanage.

1.4 FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY

I first began this project in 1998 when I was frequently asked about my earlier experiences traveling and teaching English in China, by friends, colleagues and their acquaintances who were interested in adopting Chinese girls. People I spoke with wanted to know more about the situation facing adoptive parents who were traveling to China, the conditions of Chinese SWIs, and the reasons why there were so many abandoned children, especially healthy girls. While I could help with some basic travel information, and had seen dozens of adopting parents while in Guangzhou in early 1997, I realized I knew very little about the social issues surrounding the abandonment and adoption of children in China.

In 1999, I constructed a summer-long pilot project in China to determine if a long-term research project on transnational adoption would be viable. Following a highly inflammatory

1996 BBC television documentary entitled, “The Dying Rooms,” foreign access to Chinese social welfare institutes had been severely curtailed and I was worried that the Chinese adoption community would be reluctant to talk with me about such a sensitive topic. Shortly after my arrival in Beijing, however, I was relieved of this concern. One of my language teachers introduced me to a woman who worked at a Chinese office of one of the larger U.S. adoption agencies. She was extremely open and very interested in the work I had done with U.S. parents and the lives of the adopted children. Like many young people in China. she was also passionately interested in practicing her English with a native speaker. Throughout my research, I often found these two issues, an interest in U.S. adoptive families and a desire to practice English, helped form relationships with important research contacts.

Language and language study played an important role in my research. Doing research in a language other than your native language can be trying, but it can also yield important insights and benefits. Although my interviews with Chinese were conducted almost exclusively in Chinese, connections with Chinese studying English were incredibly helpful in both aiding my communications and translations and also in bonding with informants who might not feel as comfortable speaking one-on-one with a foreigner. For example, in one circumstance, I was with an Asian-American friend who spoke almost no Chinese but the person I was speaking with was an older gentleman who hadn’t chatted much with foreigners. Although he and I were speaking in Chinese, he only made eye-contact with the Asian face of my friend.

On the other hand, there were many times that informants might have been comfortable telling me things because I was a foreigner who did not have a Chinese face. As other researchers in China have noted, the position of foreign researchers in China can be quite varied. At one pole, a foreigner might only be shown “the best” side of things. At the other, a foreigner

might be someone who is unconnected to the fabric of local society, friends and family and might be seen as an uncomplicated confidante and thus privy to sensitive topics that might be off limits to other locals (Anagnost 1989; Constable 2003). This dichotomous position seemed especially true in my case because of the sensitivity of the subject matter with which I was dealing and the role foreigners played in "outing" Chinese SWIs as uncaring, dangerous places for victimized children. Some people wanted to disclose a sanitized view of adoption, whereas others were eager to discuss perceived problems or even "out" directors they felt were corrupt.

Ultimately, this dissertation is based on almost three years of ethnographic research conducted in two phases. Between 1999 and 2001 I conducted fieldwork within various aspects of the adoption process and utilized both formal and informal interviews with parents, staff, and volunteers in U.S. adoption agencies and support groups. Research involved extensive participant observation in such events as educational and travel workshops, children's playgroups and a variety of social events. In February of 2001, an agency for whom I had conducted China travel workshops recommended me as a travel companion and translator for an adopting parent (from the Pittsburgh area) whose spouse had to remain at home to care for their three biological children. Funded by the adopting parent, I accompanied a group of adopting parents on their two week trip to China to meet their children, and many of their thoughts and experiences are represented here. While all of the parents, SWI staff, volunteers and older children were fully informed of and approved of my research, in order to protect their privacy, I have used pseudonyms for them as well as for the younger children in their care.[3]

[3] At the beginning of all interviews, I introduced myself, my local and United States affiliations and explained the nature of my research and expectations for publications.

The second phase of the dissertation research was conducted in 2002-2003 while on a year-long Fulbright fellowship in the People's Republic of China. This fellowship provided me with formal research approval from a committee of Chinese scholars and an affiliation with Peking University, both of which proved enormously helpful in legitimizing my research to new contacts such as institutes' directors and staff. This phase also involved extensive participant observation at Chinese social welfare institutes, There, I often taught English or helped with translations for NGO staff or medical practitioners and thus had easy access to opportunities to play with and observe the children and interview staff. Lastly, I volunteered time as a secretary and coordinator for expatriate volunteer groups, local hospitals and international aid foundations who are building relationships with welfare institutes and providing supplemental funding and medical care to orphaned children. As a volunteer for these groups, I had access to welfare institutes in areas of the country other than Beijing including, Tianjin, Henan Province, Guangzhou, and Dalian. The diversity of these research sites, in both Northern and Southern China, illustrated important regional differences.

1.5 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Transnational adoption prompts an investigation of the ways in which visions of the family change in response to shifting capitalist modernities and state development policies, specifically with regard to the ways in which the family fulfills its dual role of producer and reproducer. Consequently, adoption, much like reproductive technologies calls into question the Western notions of family which are rooted in beliefs about consanguinial relations. While there is currently a burgeoning literature on transnational adoption which I will address in the

conclusion, when I began this project, very little scholarship existed on transnational adoption, consequently I drew heavily on scholarship in related areas.

In particular, this project draws on and contributes to three main bodies of anthropological and social science scholarship: kinship and the family, reproduction and the state, and transnationalism and identity. Ultimately, these three bodies of scholarship provide insight into the deeper meanings at work within the process of transnational adoption, which in turn informs and challenges the discourses at hand.

1.5.1 Kinship and the Family: The Enduring Relevance of Kinship Studies

> **Family:** 1. orig., all the people living in the same house; household, 2. a) social unit consisting of parents and the children that they rear b) the children of the same parents c) one's husband (or wife) and children 3) a group of people related by ancestry or marriage; relatives 4)all those claiming descent from a common ancestor; tribe or clan; lineage 5) a criminal syndicate under a single leader 6) a commune living in one household, esp. under one head 7) a group of things having a common source or similar features...
> - Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language: 2nd College Edition (1978)

As the dictionary definition above illustrates, popular conceptions of what constitutes a family are broad and quite varied. This is also true within social science disciplines and has resulted in a long and compelling debate on what constitutes "a family," "household" and "kin." For nineteenth century social theorists, kinship and family studies became an important focus for examining social phenomenon, as the family was widely accepted as the smallest definable social unit (e.g. Malinowski 1930, Marx and Engels 1978[1843], Weber 1994). This conception of the family was based on the consanguinial ties between kin, accepting the "family" as a "natural" or given entity, based only on biological, reproductive relationships or legal ties such

as adoption that created “as if” biological relationships (Maine 1861, Modell 1994). Early twentieth century anthropologists embraced this understanding of the family and conducted fieldwork aimed at cross-cultural comparisons of kinship systems. An early goal of kinship studies was to “elucidate the relationship of kinship to social structure” (Fortes 1969:52). Anthropological and sociological studies of kinship were popular until the late twentieth century, when kinship increasingly came to be seen as an antiquated and narrow focus for examining social phenomenon and many scholars turned their attention instead to gender and political economy (Stone 2001).[4]

Cultural anthropologists have long argued that kinship is not a fixed or “natural” category that is solely the product of biology. Early works challenged accepted meanings of childhood, parenthood, and family by pointing to the ways in which kinship categories vary across cultures and through time (e.g., Mead 1961; Schneider 1980; Yanagisako & Collier 1987; Dikotter 1992; Anagnost 1995). Adoption is a key example of the way in which families can be viewed as "made" rather than born. One branch of the literature on kinship and the family views adoption as a social service or legal agreement that is also a form of "fictive kinship" and family planning designed to meet a variety of familial needs (e.g., Modell 1994; Weismantel 1995). Outside of anthropology there also exists a huge body of literature on the topic of adoption in social work and psychology (e.g., Sorosky 1989; Hoopes 1995; Brozinsky 1998; Simon 2000). Rather than focus on cross-cultural comparisons, such studies tend to focus more narrowly on issues of child development, adaptation, and parental needs.

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[4] While Stone and others argue for the continuing relevance of kinship studies, they also note that a significant disinterest in the family arose largely as a result of David Schneider’s critique of kinship studies as a form of “ethnoscience” that privileges Western conceptions of social entities. See later sections for details on this critique.

Studies of Chinese kinship have focused on "traditional" forms of adoption and the significance of adoption in the context of patrilineal and patriarchal family structure (e.g., Freedman 1970; Ahern 1971; M. Wolf 1972; A. Wolf 1980; Harrell 1985; Watson 1991). In Chinese society, adoption has long been looked upon as an unfortunate substitute to having one's own biological offspring, yet childless couples generally far prefer to privately adopt a child (preferably a boy) from biological (patrilineal) kin than to adopt the child of strangers (A. Wolf & Huang 1980; Constable 1994). Recent scholarly work on birth planning policies in China suggest, however, that the stigma of adoption and the preference for sons should be reevaluated against a backdrop of modern concerns that favor “quality” families over “quantity” families, and increasingly question the importance of biological ties (Anagnost 1995; Weismantel 1995; Kligman 1998).

David Levine has examined the family’s dual role of producer (in terms of Marxian concerns about the social organization of production) and reproducer (in terms of Malthusian concerns with population) in his historical analysis of the political economy of English populations (Levine 1987). Levine sees “the family” as the product of strategies of both production and reproduction and further argues that the family is a critical site of intersection between individual motivation and social forces. Levine, much like Foucault, complicates the flow of power by shifting the “dynamism of social change from vanguards and followers toward a framework in which micro-level decisions of individual social units are both a condition of and conditioned by macro-level changes in production.” He argues that social and familial revolutions, such as the demographic transition, must be viewed within this context (Levine 1987:5). Lastly, he examines a wide variety of social ideals to further illustrate the ways in which the family and economy are intertwined. For example, he questions the notion of “respectable

reproduction" and asks whether parents are choosing to have fewer children because small families are viewed as "respectable" or whether the choices made by parents transform the notion of "respectability" (Levine 1987:187). This distinction is critical if these types of analysis are to be applied outside of Europe and to contemporary development.

Anthropologists and feminist theorists have also been concerned about the family and its role in production and reproduction and how these roles have changed and have intensified with late capitalism, An extensive scholarly discussion has developed on commodification and the development of a consumer culture – especially in relation to contemporary meanings of motherhood (Anagnost 2004; Gailey 2000; Kopytoff 2004; Layne 2000; Layne 2004; Strasser 2003; Zelizer 2005). In her contribution to the emerging field of economic sociology, Viviana Zelizer addresses "encounters of intimacy and the economy" (2005:7) and argues for a more subtle examination of the relationship between these two seemingly separate spheres. She states that, "[A]n old influential tradition asserts the existence of separate spheres and hostile worlds. In this account, a sharp divide exists between intimate social relations and economic transactions. On one side, we discover a sphere of sentiment and solidarity; on the other, a sphere of calculation and efficiency. Left to itself…each works…more or less well. But the two spheres remain hostile to each other" (2005:22). Although she does not address the meanings of motherhood directly, she is concerned with family and marital relations, and child care, vis-à-vis the "fears and taboos that surround the mixing of economic activity and intimate social relations" (2005:3). Moreover, drawing on the work of Joan Williams, she argues that "the fear of a world sullied by commodification of intimate relationships feeds opposition to granting wives entitlements based on household work" (2005:90). I argue that this type of "commodification anxiety" applies even more strongly to understandings of motherhood. As Ann Crittenden

explains, mothers may perform many kinds of "work", notably teaching, nursing and counseling (Crittenden 2004). However, in the context of motherhood, these skills have no economic value and thus reflect how social institutions (especially courts) have carefully segregated that kind of labor as a "nonmarket exchange" (2005:89). Zelizer concludes that "women's key problem has been too little commodification, not too much" (2005:90).

Zelizer makes an important contribution to understanding the ways in which intimate relationships are brought into the marketplace, despite efforts to separate these spheres. *Consuming Motherhood* is a volume edited by Janelle Taylor that provides an intensive look at notions of motherhood within the context of consumption in late capitalism. Taylor defines the project as a "reprise of a question that has been central to social theory since Marx. How are relations among people shaped and mediated by relations between people and objects" (2004:2)? In this volume, Rothman argues that while "feminists have been able…to capitalize on the value of ownership to gain certain rights for women, particularly what are called 'reproductive rights" [however] there have been attendant costs, with regard both to the owned body and to the owned child" (2004:21). She concludes that our respect for property can work in the interests of children. However, "the combined forces of capitalism, technology, and patriarchy encourage us to commodify children in some of the least desirable ways" (2004:21). Rothman discusses the "ownership" of children primarily from the vantage point of surrogacy but this perspective can be applied in important ways to adoption and other alternative methods of family "building" as well.

Much previous scholarship as been devoted to an analysis of motherhood, the family, and systems of kinship. As Malkki and Martin have pointed out however, "children have relatively rarely constituted an anthropological research topic and have instead tended to be studied in developmental psychology, child development, social work, and policy-oriented fields"

(2003:217). As Stephens argues, “the theorization and the contemporary political uses of the figure of the child are inextricable from the gendered politics of globalization” (Stephens in Malkki & Martin 2003:216). In an attempt to address the lack of attention to children, an additional goal of this research is to, wherever possible, place the focus more squarely on the children themselves and to examine their participation within the gendered politics of globalization in late capitalism. Although many of the children are not yet old enough to discuss their situation, or to explain in their terms, their perspectives, as they grow older, are an important topic for follow-up research.

1.5.2 Reproduction and the State: Conceptions of Modernity

> The third circumstance which, from the very outset, enters into historical development, is that men, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men, to propagate their kind: the relation between man and woman, parents and children, *the family*
>
> Karl Marx, 1845 (Tucker 1978:156).

> [we must posit] the family, not as a point of departure, as a manifest reality, but as a moving resultant, an uncertain form whose intelligibility can only come from studying the system of relations it maintains with the sociopolitical level (Donzelot 1979: xxv).

Anthropologists and historians have argued that nearly from the inception of Western nation-states and colonial enterprises, the ideals of “quality” and “quantity” populations, and thus families, have been intertwined with the state (e.g. Malthus 1798, Marx and Engels 1843, Engels 1884, Donzelot 1979, Foucault 1984, Dikkoter 1992, Schneider and Schneider 1996, Kraeger

1997, Stoler 1997, Browner 2001).[5] A second critical body of literature centers on reproduction and the state and the construction of "modernity." This literature examines the varied roles of different states vis-à-vis reproduction, and the implications of such policies for an analysis of gender, citizenship and nationalism (Rapp and Ginsburg 1995). As the disciplines of anthropology and sociology developed a further interest in political economy in general, and the conceptualizations of the state in particular, there was a shift "towards looking at the state as incorporating a number of institutions whose role appears strictly private and/or primarily 'ideological' (such as the church, the family, the school, the media, etc.) - a tradition whose origins are in Gramsci but also in Althusserian and Poulantzian tradition of social analysis" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:4).[6] Other approaches to the state, utilizing the notions of imagination and imagined communities (Anderson 1983, Appadurai 1996), became concerned with the various ways in which the state is conceptualized, represented and imagined (Gupta 1995:375). The notion of imagination is critical because it provides a theoretical resolution to

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[5] Anagnost's term "quality" is used to discuss a population that is smaller and thus better nurtured through improved medical conditions, education, etc. It is not meant to refer to Western notions, discussed by Dikotter and Foucault, of a eugenics which emphasizes racial quality based on "pure blood" (Anagnost 1995). She further clarifies that "in the discussion of China's population as an overlarge, ignorant and backward (*luohou)* mass, the Chinese body is seen (by Chinese planners) as a largely consuming body, its productive capacities made quiescent by the egalitarian policies of the pre-reform era. The consuming demands of this body are out of balance with productivity" and the birth planning policies are designed to bring these two features into alignment and thus attain a comfortable lifestyle (*xiaokang shenghuo)* that is measured in terms of basic commodities and living conditions acquired through the "readiness of the disciplined work force to be absorbed into the global economy" (Anagnost 1995, 30). In an introductory discussion of population and poverty in Schneider and Schneider's Festival of the Poor, the history of the idea of "quality" families (and lifestyles) is discussed in some detail beginning with the example of Richard Cantillon's (a French merchant and early economist) assertion that "the deepest motivation for deferred marriage was not the absence of employment, as such, but 'fear of a fall in status'" (Schneider and Schneider 1996:23).

[6] The references to Althusser and Poulantzas, are important because they position the discussion within structuralist Marxism. This framework provides a notion of the state and its use of various social institutions which is useful in that it provides individuals with a way of situating themselves in relation to society; a concept that Althusser termed "mode of recognition." He further argued that the mode of recognition was a means through which dominant ideology was reproduced and reinforced (Marshall 1998:16).

the problem inherent in the state/society dichotomy. This tension is incorporated by using the often fragmentary and diffuse local interactions with the state as a "key arena where representations of the state are constituted and where its legitimacy is contested" because it is "through the practices of such local institutions that a translocal institution such as the state comes to be imagined" (Gupta 1995:383-4). Colonial studies have proved to be an important arena for viewing the impact of the imagination and hegemonic construction from the vantage point of historical analyses (Said 1979, Anderson 1983, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, Gupta 1995). For example, Said argued that the seemingly "obvious" categories of East and West, Orient and Occident are in fact not an inert fact of nature, but rather cultural constructions of colonial power (Said 1978:5). Once one is reminded of this fact, the question which comes to the fore is how and why were these categories and images created? Furthermore, if one must be *made* an Oriental, the implication is that this category is politically useful, and is thus enmeshed within a struggle for power and a discourse on cultural hegemony (Foucault 1986, Said 1978). I will argue that this notion of the "imagined" state has particular relevance to analyses of the family and kinship.

The discourses on power and the state have had a profound impact on kinship studies. In addition to providing a critique of earlier kinship models, they have also become the basis for a new and more holistic approach that seeks to engage (often historically) with the family at sites of power and at points in which they interact with other social entities such as the state. This includes such sites of interaction as sex (reproduction and birth control); birth, death and marriage registrations; the care of abandoned children, and the surveillance of pregnant women (e.g. Foucault 1978, Donzelot 1979, Kertzer 1993, Anagnost 1995, Schneider and Schneider 1996, Stoler 1997). More recently, both anthropologists and political economists have acknowledged the

cultural contexts within which decisions about populations and families are made (Yuval-Davis 1989, Greenhalgh 1990, Dikkoter 1992, Kertzer 1993, Schneider and Schneider 1996). Finally, political economy has provided a tool with which assumptions about the family may be challenged.

In addition to political economy, technological advances have also influenced social understandings of "family." By the mid-twentieth century, reproductive technologies made it possible for states to become involved in family planning and reproductive decisions on an unprecedented scale as they promoted or opposed contraception, pronatalism, or family planning. Many scholars argue that despite states' radically different antinatal (e.g. China) or pronatal agendas (e.g. Romania), these policies -- in addition to policies on immigration -- are a critical site of state authority and influence, and such policies reflect wider values and concerns about gender, kinship, nationalism and modernity (e.g., Tsing 1990; Dikotter 1992; Greenhalgh 1994; Anagnost 1995; Das 1995; Kligman 1998; Kalpana and Jolly 1998). The Chinese government instituted its birth planning policy, the "one pregnancy whether boy or girl" policy (*du sheng zi nu),*[7] in tandem with the 1978 economic policies and the drive for "modernization." Consequently, it is clear that the Chinese state considers economic modernization (i.e., "progress") and population control inextricably linked (Greenhalgh 1994). Anagnost argues that China's population is currently constructed as "illth,"[8] in the Malthusian sense, reflecting a contemporary Chinese view that a large and growing population leads to catastrophe and not "wealth" (Anagnost 1997). Because

[7] This is the literal translation of the Chinese policy. However, this policy is widely referred to in the West as the "one child" policy.

[8] Illth is a concept developed by John Ruskin to critique Malthus's theory that populations reach a critical mass that leads to such dire consequences as famine and plague. The term is often used in twentieth century Euramerican discourses on "third world" underdevelopment as rooted in population problems rather than in "unequal exchanges of wealth and power, capital and labor, on a global scale" (Anagnost 1997, 133).

China is the state with the world's largest single population and some of the most domestically and internationally controversial state-mandated birth planning policies, much recent scholarship has addressed both the cultural meanings and the consequences of these types of policies within the Chinese context (e.g., Greenhalgh 1994; White 1994; Johnson 1998; Skinner 1998).

While anthropologists working in China are particularly focused on state mandated birth-planning policies, in the United States, Collier and others have argued that U.S. cultural conceptions traditionally view the family as "the antithesis of market relations of capitalism; it is also sacralized in our minds as the last stronghold against the state, as the symbolic refuge from the intrusion of a public domain that constantly threatens our sense of privacy and self determination" (Collier et. al. 1982:37). Helena Ragone notes in her 1997 article on surrogacy in the United States that middle-class U.S. parents are not generally comfortable discussing market forces in conjunction with family relationships because of the seeming contradiction between the altruism of parental love and the payment for services rendered. In the cases of U.S. parents adopting abandoned Chinese girls, Anagnost also identifies a narrative of "salvation and redemption" where "The saving of the child is portrayed as a heroic act, but one resulting in a full mutuality of affect, an exchange of love that cannot be bought" (Anagnost 1999:399). In my work, I have also found that many U.S. parents see transnational adoption as a way of building "socially responsible" families that may challenge and/or manipulate state authority. Thus for them, the red thread is viewed in a positive light, rather than as a symbol of commodification or commercialization.

If one acknowledges that the family is the most fundamental social unit, a social unit in which nearly every person participates, inevitably, all aspects of globalization have ramifications for the family and studies of kinship. In fact, a wide variety of ethnographic studies have connected changes in the family to the wider process of globalization. Such studies include: analyses of

migrations that create family ruptures and new kin networks (Stack 1996, Small 1997); studies of new labor and consumption patterns, often created by transnational corporations, that affect ideas about gender and kin networks (Ong 1989, Constable 1997, Watson 1998, Salazar-Parrenas 2001); studies of the global politics of reproduction (Ginsburg and Rapp et. al. 1995) and analyses of agencies (which heavily utilize computer networks) to create new family alliances through adoption and correspondence marriage (Anagnost 2000, Constable 2001).

Anagnost's web-based ethnographic study of parents adopting internationally raised several critical questions about adoptive families, the state's role in "transnational circuits of exchange" and the formation of multicultural, transnational identities (Anagnost 2000:393). Anagnost uses the phrase "scenes of misrecognition" to denote the problems U.S. parents face in explaining the apparent "difference" of their Chinese-born child and how this can be viewed as a challenge to the idea that the child is really theirs; in this way misrecognition challenges the "as-if biological" ideal of adoption (Maine 1861, Modell 1994). As Anagnost notes, "Perhaps because international adoption transgresses what Lisa Lowe calls 'the historically produced spatial discipline and geographical separations' that position immigrant groups in U.S. society, the relation of the parent to the child becomes something that must be continually explained" (Anagnost 2000:394). Anagnost further situates the family within a political economic context by examining the ways in which children fit into "transnational circuits of exchange" and critiques of babies for "sale." This is tied to an ongoing concern with the ways in which pricing adoption services can be a form of commodification of children (Zelizer 1985, Anagnost 2000:394). Lastly, although the Chinese children adopted since the 1990's are still too young for a meaningful discussion of their cultural identity formation, Anagnost raises the issue of the ways in which ideas about race and culture will be constituted within these new transnational families and how this identity will be shaped by new

communities of adoptive families. Ultimately, she sees the above-mentioned misrecognition as a type of "trauma of citizenship that has become so pervasive in U.S. life as to threaten to exhaust cultural struggles over the 'national symbolic' in its fragmentation of the political. This outcome, Berlant suggests, is the direct effect of a conservative cultural politics that, in an ironic reversal of feminist strategy, insists on 'making the political personal' [and thus a] contraction of the political into the family" (Anagnost 2001:395).

1.5.3 Transnationalism and Identity: The Global and the Local

> The central assertion...is that the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like 'nation', 'society', and 'culture' name bits and threaten to turn names into things. Only by understanding these names as bundles of relationships, and by placing them back into the field from which they were abstracted, can we hope to avoid misleading inferences and increase our share of understanding (Wolf 1982: 3).

Since the late 1980s, the dissemination of global technologies, especially the Internet, has raised popular awareness of "globalization" as a complex process that goes beyond international economics. Feminists have developed a "culture and political economy" approach that identifies four processes that are "related to the globalization of capital [and] have shaped cultural meanings on a global scale" (di Leonardo 1991, Lamphere et.al. 1997). Lamphere summarizes four "processes" of globalization: (1) transnational corporations' utilization of dispersed production process that require a highly mobile workforce, (2) the rise of global technologies such as the Internet, and satellite communications, (3) the development of biotechnologies, notably reproductive technologies, and (4) the rise of globalized media technology (Lamphere, et.al. 1997). Appadurai has defined sites of disjunctures that identify aspects of globalization that

are seemingly in conflict with one another. This is similar to disjunctures or conflicts he has also identified with regard to culture and political economy. In addition, he has emphasized the notion of "imagined worlds" and developed a terminology of transnational flows to emphasize the complex and interrelated aspects of globalization. Specifically, Appadurai explains the global flow of people as ethnoscapes, the global distribution of media as mediascapes, the global flow of technology as technoscapes, the global flow of money and currency markets as financescapes, and lastly, the global flow of ideology as ideoscapes (1996).

While the term "globalization" is popularly used to refer to international economic forces, Ong's use of the term transnationalism has a broader dimension that addresses social processes which literally act across nation-states and thus blur conventional geographic and social boundaries (Ong 1999). Ong argues that in an age of capital mobility, the state has established new relationships with citizens and non-citizens, creating a flexible citizenry whose "transnational practices and imaginings" (promoted by global technologies, such as the Internet) reflect a realignment of cultural identities that are both promoted by the state and outside of it (Ong 1999:3). Increasingly, scholars have argued that the Chinese diaspora is an important part of such a transnational Chinese community, transcending state boundaries and narrow legal definitions of citizenship (e.g., Ong and Nonini 1997). Consequently, if identities are no longer contained by geography, the question becomes, what constitutes cultural boundaries? As Dikotter argues, a Chinese concept of shared "race" is of greater significance than any necessary requirement for shared culture (Dikotter 1992). Thus, overseas adoption may not simply be viewed as letting less valued members of society leave, but as a possible means of expanding the current conception of being Chinese.

In large part, this paradigm shift has been created by a global cultural order in which a "global imagination" has become increasingly possible. That people in many parts of the world can consider a wider range of possible lives, plays a critical role in the construction of social life (e.g., Anderson 1991; Anagnost 1995; Appadurai 1995; Ong 1997). Furthermore, as studies of overseas Chinese communities suggest, deterritorialization and globalization heighten the power of imagination by increasingly blurring boundaries at the state and local levels. Consequently, the role of overseas Chinese in interpreting Chinese identity and ethnicity is critical because they do not function as a diaspora. Instead, they create a "third space" that is between East and West and neither "core" nor "periphery" (Ang 1997; Gao 1998; Ong 1999).

Although anthropologists prior to the 1990s focused heavily on local, ethnographic research, those with an interest in political economy have been grappling with more complex exchanges both between and across nations and have developed several paradigms in an attempt to address "the world" and, ultimately the process of globalization. This process is critical because it provides a lens through which to view sociopolitical space in which individuals and families can challenge existing state authority. In turn, this causes states to address individual and local concerns as a means of realigning state influence. Adoption agreements negotiated between states, recent changes in the adoption and family planning policies, and immigration policies of several nations are all evidence of how cultural and political boundaries can be blurred as interactions across borders are facilitated.

Commonly referred to as "international" adoption, adoptions between parents of one country and children from another country are typically referred to as "intercountry" adoptions within the sociological and adoption literature. However, an analysis of these forms of adoption leads to the realization that both terms are, at best, an oversimplification of the complex dynamics

involved in the creation of these families. Aihwa Ong's distinction of the differences between transnationalism and globalization is useful in capturing a more accurate account of the depth involved in these relationships. The term globalization is typically used to describe a process of intertwined world economies and societies (Thrift, 1995: 18). However, as Ong notes, *trans* denotes movement and change across space. Consequently, *trans*nationality implies not just the movement across geopolitical borders, but also, an interconnectedness that is also *trans*formative (Ong, 1999).

Although the adoptees are still young and their involvement in their local and diasporic communities as yet unclear, I assert that their migration, like other migrations within a global capitalist context, is "neither unidirectional nor final" and "reflects major changes in the nature of movements across space and in this way may be considered to be part of a distinct transnational diaspora" (Yeoh and Willis, 1999: 2). Ang and others acknowledge that diasporas are inherently transnational in that they link the global and local and "have the potential to unsettle static, essentialist and totalitarian conceptions of 'national culture' and 'national identity' which are firmly rooted in history and geography" and challenge the hegemony of a "mythic homeland" even while they emphasize ties to that homeland (Ang, 1993: 13; Chow, 1991). Ang envisions a conception of diasporas that addresses the tension between the notions of "where you are from" and "where you are at" that results in a "creative syncretism" and produces hybrid cultural forms (Ang, 1993: 13; van der Veer, 1995). While this understanding of transnational communities stresses that "culture" may be produced as well as lost in this process, the nature of a syncretic and hybrid culture is, like core-periphery and center-minor paradigms, dichotomous and therefore

problematic.[9] Furthermore, transnational communities are indicative of the problems of representation and identity construction that are attendant to the time-space compression created as places move closer together within a new space of flows resulting from electronic media and transportation innovations (Harvey 1974). Consequently, Featherstone's conception of a "third culture" that functions within a "third space" more effectively captures the tensions and resistance inherent in negotiating this process (Featherstone, 1990, Ong and Nonini, 1997).

1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This dissertation is organized around three broad themes: adoptive families and cultural identity; gender, race and citizenship; and adoption and labor in China. These three themes capture both the core issues that arose from my field research as well as the broader literatures that inform my ethnographic account.

1.6.1 Adoptive Families and Cultural Identity

Chapters 2 and 3 are tied to literature on transnationalism and identity. Chapter 2 is an ethnographic accounting of my experiences interviewing parents prior to their travel to China and, as a travel companion throughout a two week adoption trip with a group of nine pairs of adopters. This chapter situates experiences shared with parents and perceptions of local Chinese within the

[9] Core-periphery models, developed by Wallerstein and others, are political economy approaches that examine the exercise of power and "shift attention from communities bounded within nations, and from nations themselves to spaces of which nations are components" (Kearney, 1995, p.549). The center-minor relationship was developed by Rey Chow to explain the positionality of minorities within a community (Zhong, 1999, p.120).

context of migration and diaspora communities as it explores the ways in which white, middle-class parents attempt to (re)create a sense of "Chineseness."

Closely related in theme to Chapter 2, Chapter 3 continues with the theme of transnational adoption and identity by examining the ways in which "virtual" identities are being debated and constructed in globalizing spaces such as the Internet. In addition, this chapter draws on the experiences of earlier waves of adoptees from Korea who are facing identity issues and have thus been constructed by many in the adoption community to serve as a "model" for younger adoptees from China. In addition to experiences here in the United States, return trips, known as heritage tours, have been promoted by both the state (Korea and China) and the adoption community as key components to constructing a cultural identity. This chapter explores the nature of these tours and the ways in which "returning home" is one aspect of the creation of a discrete community of adopted girls from China.

1.6.2 Gender, Race and Citizenship

Chapter 4 examines the ways in which different, and sometimes competing, notions of gender, race and culture interact in a postcolonial era. More specifically, this chapter examines the ways in which the transnational process of adoption is particularly gendered and "raced" given that approximately ninety-five percent of adoptees are female. Parents in the United States construct their understanding through the lens of neocolonialist stereotypes of Asian femininity, such as China dolls, that emphasize their docility, fragility and victimized status. However, examining adoptees in conjunction with the broader population of children abandoned and remaining in China calls into question some of the ways in which feminist scholars have contributed to the popular conception that girls are unwanted in China and must therefore be "saved" through a

privileged form of immigration to the United States and new white middle-class families. In addition, Chapter 4 continues this critique with a historical perspective on Asian immigration to the United States and the ways in which the socially constructed category of race has played out within the confines of adoption in the United States. There is a marked contrast between the experiences and stereotypes facing Chinese children available for international adoption and African-American children available for U.S. domestic adoption. One particularly important recent phenomenon in this regard is the increasing numbers of African-American children who are leaving the United States as transnational adoptees to other countries, particularly in Western Europe and Canada.

1.6.3 Adoption and Labor in China

While the two previous themes have focused primarily on the context of transnational adoption in the United States vis-à-vis immigration, constructing Chinese-American identities and so forth, the third theme focuses on the Chinese context of transnational adoption, including the ways in which various international groups are working in China through NGOs that are working to improve the quality of care for Chinese orphans. In many cases, such groups describe their mission as "saving children." Chapter 5 complicates the meanings of salvation and the various goals of NGOs. I have grouped these NGOs into three key categories based on their primary membership: adoption; expatriate/overseas Chinese; and missionary. Here I examine the ways in which salvation narratives work both for and against improved material conditions for children.

Chapter 6 grapples more directly with issues of commodification as it examines the ways in which transnational adoption workers work within the context of a global capitalist economy and are intimately linked to migration and transnational movement and yet, unlike other "global

women" do not actually migrate. From this vantage point, despite their work of caring, they perhaps compare more easily to marginalized women workers on the global assembly line whose "products" are designed for consumption overseas. This is the basis for critiques of stratified (and commodified) systems of (re)production. While much attention has been paid to the ways in which children are potentially commodified and "markets" for adoptive children created within this global system, here I focus on the specter of commodification that pervades the discourse of Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption because of persistent media references, and the comparatively devalued "work of caring" for children that largely parallels other forms of gendered transnational labor.

1.7 CONCLUSION

As the following chapters argue, transnational adoption illustrates some important changes in late 20th century notions of kinship and the continuing relevance of the family as a social unit. In addition, this form of adoption exemplifies the ways in which contemporary families, much like their corporate counterparts, negotiate global space and state policies to pursue their own needs and visions of family "ideals." In tracing the metaphorical red thread and the shifting imagery associated with the Chinese-U.S. adoption process, this research examines how adoptive parents in the United States and children in China are brought together across cultural and state boundaries via a variety of global networks, such as adoption and government agencies, as well as the Internet. This research demonstrates that family decisions, including both the decision to give up a child up for adoption and the decision to adopt, are linked to processes of globalization

and modernization, and that international adoption reflects increasingly fluid conceptions of the family, cultural communities, and state boundaries.

2.0 BUILDING FAMILIES HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD

2.1 OVERVIEW

A buoyant expectant mother turns to her husband and happily tells him, "It's time." Quickly, the parents bustle around the house, hurriedly grabbing jackets, keys and bags and leave their home. They get into their car and abruptly arrive at their destination in anticipation of the arrival of their first child. For these parents, featured in a U.S. nation-wide advertising campaign by J.C. Penney's department store, the delivery of their new child will be at the airport, not the local hospital. The commercial, shown on CBS during the 2000 coverage of the Sydney Olympics, ends with the parents (who are white) returning home with their Asian daughter.[10] This advertisement, in addition to images promoted by IKEA, John Hancock, Target, Weight Watchers, Mothering magazine, National Public Radio and others, is indicative of the rising awareness of international and interracial adoptions. While cultural anthropologists have long argued that kinship is not a fixed or "natural" category that is solely the product of biology,

[10] While the nature of the Chinese international adoption process precludes this child from being Chinese (all parents adopting Chinese children must travel to China to finalize the adoption), this advertisement is one example of the increasingly commonplace images of Asian children being adopted into U.S. families.

adoption is a key example of the ways in which families can be viewed as "made" rather than born. Modernization and globalization have further expanded the possible conceptions of the family in the form of international adoptions.

Whereas studies of kinship in China have most often focused on "traditional" forms[11] of adoption and the significance of domestic and local adoption in the context of Chinese patrilineal and patriarchal family structure (e.g. M. Wolf 1972; A. Wolf 1980; Hsu 1981; Watson 1991), Western sociological and psychological studies focus on identity formation and ways in which adoptees must deal with issues of abandonment and questions about their unknown past. These studies argue that the adoptive triangle of adoptee, biological parents, and adoptive parents, has a unique life-cycle that is centered around the adjustment to loss resulting from abandonment and biological kin (Sorosky 1989; Hoopes 1995; Brozinsky 1998). However, for transnational and transracial adoptees, these issues are heightened because, due to apparent "racial" difference, they are frequently identified as members of a cultural group that differs from that of their adopted families (Cox 1999; Tessler 1999; Simon 2000).[12]

This chapter, in contrast to studies that approach international or interracial adoptions from the vantage point of child development, social service agreements or parental needs, explores the new transnational terrain of "migratory families" made up of U.S. parents and their

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[11] I use the word "traditional" here to refer to studies that look at Chinese families prior to post 1949 Mainland Chinese legal reforms that dramatically impacted marriage, divorce and childbirth practices.

[12] Here I am referring to the discourse on race as a social construction (e.g. Dikkotter 1992; West 2001; Frankenburg 2003). While phenotypical differences between groups certainly exist and have been categorized as "race" in many societies, it is widely accepted that these differences do not constitute a discreet biological category. Despite this distinction, ideas, perceptions and implications of "race" remain powerful within many societies. In the United States, there are significant differences between the politics of adopting Asian and African-American children. In addition, while the notion of "race" has a long and difficult history in the United States, it remains a distinctly important concept in China as well. These issues will be addressed further in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

adopted Chinese daughters. While this topic can also be addressed from several angles (e.g. the historical context of Western and Chinese "types," the flow of cultural capital, and the increasingly fluid nature of not just families, but cultural communities and state boundaries as well), the scope of this chapter will be limited to a discussion of how these new families made up of adoptive parents in the United States and children in China brought together across cultural and state boundaries via a variety of global networks such as adoption and government agencies and the Internet, reflect increasingly fluid conceptions of the family and cultural identities.

This chapter is drawn from data collected during the first phase of my research in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and throughout a two-week trip to China as a translator and travel companion for an adopting U.S. mother in 2001. Here I will focus on key aspects of the adoption process including: the parents' initiation into the transnational adoption process, their perceptions of the context within which Chinese children are given up by their biological parents, and the parents' plans to integrate Chinese culture into their family. I will also examine the ways in which these adoptees constitute a unique diaspora community that both challenges and contributes to notions of Chinese cultural identity that exist within a "third space."

Writing about the postcolonial condition in the *Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha defined "third space" as a kind of hybrid that eludes the "politics of polarity" (1994:38). The subversive nature of this construct thus undercuts binaries such as East/West, or in this case Chinese/American because the "meaning of symbol and culture have no…fixity" (1994:37). In this way, "even the same signs can be appropriated and read anew"(1994:37). The concept of third space may be particularly compelling with regard to transnational adoption between the United States and China, given the complicated ways in which the typically white, middle-class U.S. parents will be responsible for communicating a sense of "Chineseness."

Following an introduction to the background of U.S. parents, this chapter will describe adoption travel and the unique terrain of transnational, transracial, "third space" families from the vantage point of the following questions frequently asked by parents as they first confront these issues: 1) How do I imagine adoption? 2) What will it be like to adopt a "foreign" child? and 3) What type of relationship will I and my family build with China and Chinese culture?

2.2 BACKGROUND: U.S. PARENTS AND ADOPTION TRAVEL

The conception of many transnational adoptive families begins with the parents' realization that their families will not meet the model of the "ideal" family with which many Americans still identify. The traditional nuclear family model of mother, father and biological offspring identified by Schneider (1980) and widely discussed in popular, contemporary debates over "family values" differs from contemporary concerns that involve sexual orientation, age, marital status, reproductive health and other factors. After coming to this realization, the parents I have worked with decide to explore the myriad of available adoption options. For many parents, domestic adoptions are dismissed rather quickly because of the lengthy application process, which can easily reach four or five years, the increasingly "open" nature of domestic adoptions, and the perception that the domestic adoptee population is relatively small (Simon & Altstein

2000).[13] Specifically, the vast majority of parents identified their primary concern with domestic adoptions as the law allowing U.S. mothers up to six months to change their minds and reclaim their babies.[14] Older children are most often available through foster care programs which entails a different set of obstacles for prospective parents. In addition, lawsuits by mothers who had exceeded this time period and fathers who had never given up custody were of great concern. In 2001, extensive media coverage of an Internet adoption facilitator who had arranged an adoption of twins by a California couple and then again by a British couple (the so-called "Internet Twins") is further evidence of the custody concerns facing domestic adoptive parents (http://www. adoptionnation.comtalkback html).

Most parents decide to opt for Chinese adoptions relatively quickly although this option is rarely the first one they consider. Nearly all U.S. parents adopting Chinese children are white and of European descent and most begin the adoption process by considering Russian or Eastern European adoptions (Pertman 2000). Ultimately, through conversations with adoption agencies and other adoptive parents, these parents identify several key reasons for not following through on Russian adoptions: 1) they perceive these children to be at significant risks for developmental problems, notably, fetal alcohol syndrome, 2) Russian adoptions are perceived to be "unpredictable" and typically require two trips overseas, and 3) many hear stories about the

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[13] "Open" adoptions have become increasingly common in the United States over the last two decades. While there are many variations possible, in general, the term means that some contact between adoptive and birth families is maintained. According to Adoptive Families Magazine, "Since the mid-1970s, open adoptions have been widely accepted as more compassionate and enlightened than the secretive adoptions of a previous generation. Indeed, the confidentiality that once defined adoption is no longer the norm. While international adoptions remain mostly closed, as do many public agency adoptions, domestic adoptions increasingly involve contact between adoptive parents and birthparents" (Carney 2004).

[14] Over the course of three years of research I surveyed over 100 parents, traveled on an adoption trip with 9 adopting couples and spoke with many other parents and adoption agency staff.

"trade" in children, especially in Romania, and are suspicious of the legitimacy of the fees being charged by the Russian agencies. Through word of mouth, newspaper articles, and adoption networks, these parents then become aware of Chinese adoptions.

When adoptive parents are asked why they chose Chinese adoptions, they cite several reasons: 1) they see the adoptions as anonymous, closed and final; 2) the adoptees are in generally good health - with almost no evidence of prenatal drug or alcohol use by the mother, although they may be undernourished; 3) only one relatively short adoption trip is necessary (typically about two weeks); 4) the process is predictable and is not perceived as being corrupted by bribery or other forms of commodification; and 5) the parents desire to adopt a girl. Many parents were also familiar with China's birth planning policies and the perceived increase in orphaned girls. For example, several of the parents had read adoption sources such as Karin Evans' The Lost Daughters of China (2000), and expressed a special interest in "saving" one of these girls. Although salvation narratives are a potential backdrop to all adoptions, their importance seems especially strong to parents adopting from China, who see the birth planning policies as a particularly draconian form of communist control over the individual, a challenge to the notion of inalienable rights and an expression of prejudice against women. A full discussion of salvation narratives is included in Chapter 5, "Saving Children Body and Soul."

2.3 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The year 2000 witnessed significant changes in the legalities surrounding transnational adoptions, mainly because in September of 2000, the United States ratified a Hague Convention treaty that attempts to provide *global* standards, safeguards and practices for parents, agencies

and orphanages. Some key points of the treaty are that adoption agencies and facilitators must be approved at a national level, the child's country of origin must maintain birth and adoption records, entry into the host country must be pre-approved before the adoption is finalized, all fees and policies must be publicly disclosed, children with two birth parents became "eligible orphans," and agencies that conduct home-studies must be Convention accredited (Freivalds 2001).[15]

On October 30, 2000, President Clinton also signed into law H.R. 2883, the Child Citizenship Act of 2000. While the regulations regarding the implementation of this law are currently being drafted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in effect, this law states that "Beginning February 27, 2001, certain foreign-born children - including adopted children - currently residing permanently in the United States will acquire citizenship *automatically"* (http://www.ins.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/factsheets/adopted.htm). In short, Chinese children can now meet their parents, board a plane, travel perhaps fifteen hours and, immediately upon landing on U.S. soil, "become" Americans. The lengthy process of acquiring citizenship, much to the relief of adoptive parents, has been largely eliminated for adopted children, in marked contrast to those who fall into other categories of immigrants.

China has also changed its policies on adoption, especially with regard to domestic adoption. Chinese birth planning policies up to 1999 treated adoptions within an "as if" biological framework, and thus considered a couple to have filled their quota of "births" regardless of whether their children were biological or adopted. However, these policies were revised in 1999 to give consideration to adoptive parents, and thus, hopefully, encourage domestic adoption. Though

[15] There are extensive details and regulations with regard to home study requirements. Requirements are included within the text of the Hague Treaty and are also readily disclosed by accredited agencies.

she criticizes birth planning policies as damaging to families and women, Kay Johnson, in Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son (2005), notes that there has been a considerable increase in the number of *official* domestic adoptions. Johnson notes that 10,700 children were adopted by Chinese from Chinese SWIs in 2000, an increase of 4000 children from the previous year. In addition, "[t]here were also 24,400 registered domestic adoptions of foundlings outside welfare institutions in 1999 and 37,000 in 2000 adoptions" (Johnson 2005:150). However, she notes these increases are only in registered adoption. Given that historically, many adoptions in China were arranged outside of the state system, these figures do not necessarily represent an overall increase in adoption (2005:150).

The recent changes in U.S. immigration policy (the Citizenship Act of 2000), 1999 Chinese revisions to birth planning policies, and the Hague Convention treaty on international adoptions are all critical examples of state, and global responses to the local demands of U.S. parents eager to expand their family through transnational adoption, the perceived need for regulation and the prevention of baby "selling," and resistance of local families to national birth planning and economic policies. This dialogue is indicative of the complex webs of power relations expressed between and across the local, state, and global centers of power. Furthermore, these policy changes illustrate how the needs and desires of parents and children, (i.e., families) create situations in which state and global authorities feel *compelled* to respond. Regulating agencies such as U.S. state and federal governments, the Chinese provincial authorities and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the international body at the Hague, utilize tools such as home studies, immigration policies, and international treaties to mediate and even facilitate local familial needs. While this provides an important service to adoptive families, this form of regulation, like other modes of policing the family, illustrates how the key purpose of regulation is to ensure the

"good fortune of the state through the wisdom of its regulation and to augment its forces and its powers to the limits of its capabilities [situating the family] as both queen and prisoner" of the state (Donzelot 1979:7).

The reaction of the U.S. adoption community to these legal changes is compelling. Many view these changes as very real, first time *public* statements that "confirm the legitimacy and even the desirability of intercountry adoptions arrangements made between countries" by providing ethical accountability and a "central source of authoritative information [which] may keep intercountry adoption alive for decades to come" (Freivalds 2001, 30). Although 42 nations have accepted the Hague treaty, the U.S. adoption community clearly interprets the actions of various nations quite differently. For example, for many U.S. parents, to be a Chinese citizen implies that you are victimized by the state, its oppressive policies, and the resulting inadequate infrastructure. Although there is no discernible pattern between nations that have implemented the treaty and nations that have not, it is frequently assumed that the Chinese government would oppose implementation of the treaty since they oppose ratification of other treaties perceived to be "good" by the United States. Therefore, despite the strong state level regulation already in place in China, their signature of the treaty was seen as a "surprise move" and the liminal status of China was noted (Adoptive Families Magazine January/February 2001 13).[16] That same assumption is not made about Great Britain, Ireland, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, countries that have been equally slow to implement the treaty but that are "receiving"

[16] Of the 42 nations involved, at the time of this trip in 2001 the following twelve countries had adopted but not fully ratified the treaty: United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Switzerland, Uruguay, Bolivia, Russia, Germany, Slovakia, Belarus and China. As of October 12, 2005, China had fully ratified the Hague treaty.

countries (i.e. countries that have a large population of adoptive parents), and whose policies are perceived to be more altruistic.

Among U.S. parents, scholars, and activists, there were two main factors that might account for the interpretation of China's hesitation in ratifying the treaty. First, China accounts for the greatest single number of adoptees currently coming to the United States and is thus monitored very closely. Second, many argue that China's government has changed and opened dramatically since 1978 but remains a communist state with coercive birth planning policies and is consequently singled out for particular criticism.

While these are perhaps factors in Western perceptions of China's participation in the world community, I would argue that in the case of adoption, China's ratification status was singled out because of an increasingly pervasive perception of the "sending" countries (countries who have large adoptee populations and are most often underdeveloped nations in Asia and Latin and South America) as an "Other" whose state and family systems are unable to accommodate the needs of children. In conversations and articles concerning this subject, the adoption community consistently invests a nation's signature with a meaning that extends beyond the legalities involved and addresses how political economy is tied to their perceptions of what it means to be Chinese. Patterns of transnational adoption are often situated within concerns of stratified reproduction and the transnational flow of children from developing, "producing" nations to wealthy "consuming" nations (Hartmann 1995; Solinger 2001). These concerns and issues of race will be discussed in Chapter 4, Gender, Race and Citizenship. However, the primary concerns of parents remain focused on the "local" as they begin to build their families, not on state and global legalities.

2.4 THE BIRTH OF A FAMILY: HOW DO I IMAGINE ADOPTION?

All families begin with conceptions – some biological, some fictive and imagined. Following a legal code set down in the mid-nineteenth century, U.S. society, has largely conceptualized adoptive families within an "as if biological" framework (Maine 1861; Modell 1994). While Zelizer and others have discussed the changing "value" of children, changing notions of childhood, and their impact on views of adoption, the legal and social view of adoption "as if biological" has remained largely unchanged since its inception. U.S. adoptive families have situated their unique experiences within this framework as well.

One key way in which parents do this is through metaphors that liken the stages of the adoption to the stages of a physical pregnancy. This creates a type of "pseudo pregnancy" built around a "mythic conception" of a child conceived in the heart instead of the womb. The use of language that supports these images is common at informational workshops and playgroups organized for adoptive parents (Ragone 1997). For example, parents often situate themselves in terms of *how far along they are* (paperwork and INS clearance are early markers). At one workshop, I spoke with a couple who had been married for over seventeen years and had clearly been planning for a child, in one way or another, for some time. The imagery they used to discuss their adoption experience was similar to that used by other parents I had met at playgroups and social events. We conversed and they seemed friendly and open and immediately began with the question, "What stage in the process are you at? (i.e. where is your paperwork?) Our paperwork has just been submitted to INS." At this point, they pointed to a large and extremely well-organized file-folder that contained all the required documentation. As the parents first become involved in the process, their paperwork is the primary symbol of their love and preparedness for a child. Many of the parents discuss the paperwork itself as an entity, one that very much

embodies their hopes and expectations. As a result, the condition and status of the paperwork is carefully monitored, not just by the parents, but by the agency staff as well, and the parents' progress is often marked by the completion of background checks, immigration papers and visa requirements. As the term progresses, other factors are involved. For example, a key decision for single parents and married couples in which one parent cannot travel due to childcare or job responsibilities, is who will be their assistant or coach when the baby is *delivered* to them at their hotel.

In working with families of the Pittsburgh chapter of the support group "Families with Children from China," I attended a series of playgroups that were organized in a local church basement one Friday each month. The setting was very informal and most parents attended irregularly, depending on their other commitments. There was a large room where the girls could play ball or sing songs, such as London Bridge, in Mandarin. In informal conversations, many of the playgroup participants strongly indicated that the picture they were given of the prospective child served as an important visual tool that, much like an ultrasound, provided a sense of both bonding and reassurance (Browner & Press 1995; Rapp 1997; Taylor 2004).[17] As in any situation, tangible visual "evidence" is essential and is often privileged over other forms of communication. These visual images are extremely powerful and allowed these mothers to share the "reality" of their new child with friends and families; they seem to validate the experience. Clarissa, for example, told me about a friend who had received a picture and then was told the baby was no longer available, referring to this as a form of adoption "miscarriage." Both Clarissa and another

[17] Once the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs has processed their completed paperwork, contacted local orphanages and arranged a match, a small dossier that includes medical information and a recent photo is sent to the adoption agency and parents.

mother who was part of the conversation confirmed that this was especially wrenching. They strongly felt that their sensibilities had changed immediately upon *seeing* the baby's photograph. The predictability of the time until completion of the transnational process was also critical to the construction of a pseudo pregnancy. The time frame for the China adoptions is much closer to nine months, rarely taking longer than a year (although parents often consider a year as "way too long").

For these adoptive parents, the trip to China is figuratively the final stage of their labor. It is often seen as the most trying part of the process and the length and distance traveled signifies an overwhelming commitment to the child. Much like the preparation for the *trip* to the hospital, the parents become concerned about the practical details of the delivery in a world that is unknown to them, through a process that is mediated by a third party, be it midwife or adoption facilitator, who is providing them with a service that is essential to the delivery of the child, but whose skills and language they may not fully comprehend and over whose role they have little control.

At some level, the participants seem to be aware of these rites of passage in the bonding experience and are aware that they are marking their way through the process. For example, many of the parents and agencies caution against buying baby things, decorating a nursery, and setting up the crib too soon. As with pregnant mothers in the United States, this is considered to be risky behavior because it can bring "bad luck" and cause increased pain if delays or problems are experienced. Another question frequently faced by adoptive parents is, "Did you pick her out?" This question can also be disturbing to parents because it highlights ways in which adoptive families differ from their biological "model." It raises the awkward notion that parents might be

participants in a commodified process, which should be grounded in love and altruism (See Chapter 6, Labor or Love, for more on the idea of commodification).

For adoptive parents the process has no definite deadline. Consequently, delays that parents may experience can interrupt the “natural” flow of the process, create anxiety, and challenge their “as if” biological conception of their family. One important problem with this model is that while it fits with legal modes of conceptualizing adoptive families in familiar terms, it does not resolve the perceived social difference such as parents and children who do not “look alike” and thus have a relationship that is not rooted in the “natural.” Parents must begin to deal with questions about the formation of their families. For example, “Is she yours?” and “Is her father/mother Chinese?” Consequently, while parents create a personal narrative of families based on love and altruism that is much like that experienced by biological families, they simultaneously develop a public narrative that incorporates the difference associated with transracial and transcultural. Ultimately, adoptive parents utilize the adoptive experience in much the same way that biological parents utilize the experience of pregnancy, that is, to enforce feelings of belonging and identity in what parents consider the phrase "our family" to mean.

2.5 TRAVELING

Do we have to use chopsticks in China? – FAQ posted to http://www.fwcc.org/FAQ.htm

In February of 2001, I accompanied a group of adopting parents on their two-week trip to China to meet their children. An adoption agency introduced me to Liz because she needed a traveling companion. Her husband was staying home to care for their three biological children including two daughters, ages 10 and 12, and a four-month-old son who had quite unexpectedly arrived in the midst of their adoption preparations. Liz was comfortable about caring for her adoptive child, but was anxious about travel to China. Consequently, she was eager to have me accompany her. Besides me and Liz, our group included seven married couples and Kathy. Kathy was traveling with her sister because her husband was also at home caring for their older biological children. In addition to Liz and Kathy, one other couple, Dave and Dana, were in their first marriage and already had children. Three couples were in their second marriages, and at least one of the spouses already had grown children; one of these couples was adopting from China for the second time. The remaining three couples were first time parents who had no biological children because of fertility problems. All of the participants were white except for one interracial couple, the woman was born in Taiwan but had grown-up in the United States. This group was among the first to be processed under the new U.S. citizenship legislation. Only three out of the group of eighteen had already been to China. None of the parents expressed having had any particular interest in China prior to their interest in adoption, although all of the parents were pleased to have an opportunity to “see” China.

2.6 CHINESE PERCEPTIONS: *"XINGFU!"*

An important concern of parents in China is Chinese views of their new families. For most parents, there is little chance to interact directly with Chinese people outside of their hotels, primarily due to the language barrier, as there is only one translator per group. Occasionally, parents do meet students and others who are able to speak English. As our group strayed from the luxury accommodations so accustomed to hosting American adoptive parents, the sight of nine pairs of American parents and their Chinese daughters, on a variety of outings to parks, temples and markets, invariably created a stir. After I asked an older woman for directions in Chinese, her friends and others nearby realized that I could speak Chinese. They were eager to finally be able to talk to parents about their reasons for adopting from China, their lives in the United States, and their impressions of China.

Many Chinese commented to me that the parents were doing a good thing by adopting the children and providing them with good opportunities. Chinese onlookers would frequently hold the children's hands, grab their feet or tickle their necks and exclaim, "*Xingfu (fortunate)!*" Salespeople in shops and elderly ladies doing *tai qi* in the nearby parks, happily greeted our group, asking me questions about the girls: "How old are they?" "Will they have other brothers or sisters?" "Will they learn Chinese?" "Will they return to China?" In many ways, they seemed to be asking, "Will they still be 'Chinese'?" These questions indicate the enduring importance many mainland Chinese continue to place on language and culture as signifiers of Chinese cultural identity, particularly for Chinese who leave China.

In between squeezing cheeks and expressing concern that the babies were not dressed warmly enough, they asked about the parents as well. "Where are they from?" "Why do Americans like girls so much?" "How much does it cost?" As I translated, this last question was

particularly problematic for parents, who were now much more aware of how large both their incomes and expenses must seem to those who asked the question.[18] Parents, who in the United States had easily answered this question, found that in the Chinese context, the question felt as if someone were asking how much they paid to buy a child. Furthermore, as Helena Ragone (1997) notes in her article on surrogacy in the United States, middle-class U.S. parents are not generally comfortable discussing market forces in conjunction with family relationships because of the seeming contradiction between the altruism of parental love and the payment for services rendered. This facet of parenting in the United States is particularly important with regard to parents adopting from China because adoption requirements and costs make it nearly impossible for lower income parents to adopt. For this reason, transnational adoption has been implicated in processes of stratified reproduction whereby children (often Hispanic, African or Asian) from families in poorer, developing nations are adopted by wealthier (typically White) families in developed countries.

2.7 NEGOTIATING SPACE AND THE REPRODUCTION OF CULTURE: HOW WILL MY FAMILY RELATE TO CHINA?

> When we get home at 4PM EST on Thursday we will have traveled half-way across the world to a whole new life - Email from adoptive parent 1999.

[18] The parents typically spend an average of $20,000 (U.S.) to complete the adoption. See Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of costs. Although expenses can be quite high, they are somewhat offset by the IRS Adoption Tax Credit which allows for $10,000 per child income tax credit.

For transnational adoptive families, concerns with cultural integration begin with the home study phase of the adoption process. Following their selection of an agency, and their completion of an initial application, parents begin to compile their dossier of required paperwork. This will include their birth, marriage and (if previously married) divorce certificates, references from friends, police background checks, a variety of government immigration related forms, and financial statements. At some point near the completion of this dossier, parents will schedule a home study with a social worker. In order to complete this, the social worker will visit the home and interview the parents on at least one occasion. They must also have access to any other residents of the home. While there is some variation in the questions asked of parents, one important question that is widely addressed in the home study is, "How do you plan to address your child's Chinese identity?"[19]

Parents often take this question at face value and accept the idea of Chineseness as a fact of citizenship and genetic descent. However, there are many ways in which "Chineseness" can be understood. Andrea Louie addresses contested notion of Chineseness in her ethnography, *Chineseness across Borders* (2004). Louie examines the ways in which Americans of Chinese descent experience identity as they return to China on "roots" tours sponsored by the P.R.C. Louie argues that she is a "'living oxymoron' who fits neither into the category of 'foreigner' nor 'Chinese [though she is 'racially'] a 'descendant of the dragon by virtue of [her] black hair and yellow skin" (2004:14-15). Clearly for Louie, "race" in the sense of Asian physiognomy is an insufficient marker to be "fully" Chinese. Rather, she sees "Chineseness" as something that can "be stretched to include the many people of the diaspora, and at other times to distinguish one

[19] I spoke with representatives of five different adoption agencies and all asked this of their clients.

group within the category from another;" for example, Chinese from the Chinese-American Other (2004:21). Moreover, she "takes Chineseness to be an open signifier, a fluid and contested category that encompasses a diversity of political, 'racial,' and ethnic meanings within shifting and varied contexts" (2004:21).

The process of cultural incorporation is begun even before parents travel to China, but adoption travel initiates this process in earnest. For example, one of the first public outings for the newly united families was a trip to the Guangxi Province notaries and adoption bureau. The group was assembled in a small room and, with the aid of an interpreter, one by one each set of parents was called up to complete the necessary provincial paperwork. This was a chance for some of the parents to take pictures and have a brief conversation with the orphanage staff representing their child. Following the completion of the paperwork, the bureau director made a short speech assuring the parents that they were certain they would be good parents and wished them well. Lastly, they presented each girl with a parting gift of a string of pearls. The parents were all clearly touched and surprised by the gift.

Now that the P.R.C. paperwork was concluded and the children were officially "theirs," parents began to discuss the up-coming trip to Guangzhou in which they could finalize the U.S. side of the adoption. A significant part of the Guangzhou experience entails shopping and all of the parents had a list of items that they considered essential mementos of both China and their adoption. As Dorow has noted, the exchange and purchase of these kinds of gifts represents not just the cultural imaginaries of American adoptive parents but also those of the shopkeepers and facilitators (Dorow 2004:.94). In addition to the pearls, parents planned to collect items that, for them, signified China: Chinese characters of the girls *English* names, mandarin jackets and

stuffed panda bears. For these families, this was the first step in a long process of addressing the cultural heritage being brought into the family.

Here Featherstone's concept of a "third culture" that functions within a "third space" is useful in anticipating the ways in which these "priceless" items will be reinterpreted in hybrid cultural forms within transnational communities (Featherstone 1990; Ong and Nonini 1997). Shahnaz Khan, in her discussion of Muslim women negotiating third space, utilizes Bhabha's notion of third space to represent an individual's construction of culture from a variety of "original" national and social texts which are often contradictory, competing and ambiguous. In this way, third space is seen as a challenge to the "articulation of culture as a homogenizing and unifying force" as original signifiers are transformed and reinterpreted as wholly new symbols, such as the fortune cookie (Khan 1998:464; Ang 1993). From this perspective, one may see that gifts such as the pearls, may come to have new and potentially subversive meaning and thus not serve in the ways in which "gift exchange" has been traditionally used to unite giver and receiver, or in the Chinese context to build *guanxi*. An important example of this will be discussed in Chapter 3 in a discussion of Korean adoptees who reinterpret these kinds of gifts as symbols of their "abduction" and thus subvert the original intent of the gift to join giver and receiver.

In addressing the issue of cultural integration privately with parents, I found that they each had different ideas about how to incorporate an awareness of Chinese culture into the family. Liz felt that a commitment to language classes at a local Chinese school would require too much reorganization of the existing family routine. However, she felt that participation in special activities, such as Chinese New Year's parties and other social functions sponsored by the Families with Children from China support group, would be a valuable connection to the growing

community of Chinese daughters. Other parents expressed hope that their daughters would pursue Chinese activities such as *tai qi*.

Several mentioned the real challenge facing most parents was how to resolve the contradiction between a desire to consume Chinese culture without any "natural" access to the Chinese community in the United States. In response to these concerns, parents talked about returning to China when their children were old enough to appreciate the experience. Kathy, only half-jokingly, suggested that Men's next job could be facilitating reunion trips for the adoptive families that would allow them to travel and explore Chinese culture in a way they were unable to do because of the demands of their new children. Although the parents acknowledge that the girls themselves may or may not be receptive to these trips, especially during adolescence, they all considered potential return trips as valuable and anticipated that this would help their daughters to more fully appreciate their cultural heritage (see also Louie 2004). In addition, the parents see heritage tours as one way in which they can celebrate the unique way in which their transnational family was created. Due to the closed nature of these adoptions, at this time, parents feel secure that their daughters will be able to return to China to explore their cultural roots without the potential complications and emotional conflicts associated with conducting a search for their birth parents. However, given the experiences of older Korean adoptees, there is reason to believe that this will change. Contemporary DNA testing ensures that a search for birth parents is possible. To date, there is no indication however, that birth parents will want to be found because their abandonment of their children is so highly stigmatized. However, if state policies change and the government begins to welcome adoptees as lost "family," birth parents may feel more comfortable with being identified. Like the South Korean government, the P.R.C. has already begun to express an interest in sponsoring roots tours specifically for adoptees that frame the

return of adoptees within the context of a global Chinese family.[20] In the next chapter, *Virtually Chinese*, I examine the ways in which Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption draws upon the earlier wave of Korean adoptees and their experiences to explore notions of "Chineseness."

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has been primarily concerned with the conception of and formation of Chinese-U.S. adoptive families constructed within a gendered migration. While the importance of gender will be discussed in Chapter 4, the focus here has been on the experience of adoption travel and the ways in which parents create an uneven narrative that at times imitates the experiences of biological parents. This is especially true of the ways in which adoptive parents have created a metaphor of pseudo-pregnancy to mark their passage through the adoptive process. In other ways, adoptive parents emphasize the ways in which their families are unique and diverge from an "as if" biological model. In looking at notions of culture and "Chineseness", the narratives constructed by parents are important because they are the guardians of their child's cultural heritage. Unlike earlier waves of Chinese immigrants, however, these parents typically have a very different cultural background, one that is further emphasized by apparent racial difference. Consequently, the parents become a filter through which the child's heritage is viewed and ultimately reinterpreted, producing a new sense of Chinese identity in tandem with a new type of overseas community.

[20] Ads for these tours appeared on the CCAA (China Center for Adoption Affairs) website in 2005 but., as of October 2006, were no longer available.

Whereas this chapter focused on sites of cultural identity that are available to adoptees in the United States, the next chapter, “Virtually Chinese,” examines the ways in which Chinese-U.S. transnational families work within the framework of third space cultural hybridity to challenge and destabilize notions of culture and kinship.

3.0 VIRTUALLY CHINESE

3.1 OVERVIEW

> China adoption represents yet another site in which global flows mark culture as a dynamic and contested thing; it is a space of struggle that has real effects in the ethnicizing of subjects channeled into discrete but articulated circuits of reproduction, immigration, and embodied value (Anagnost 2000:412).

Once parent(s) and child have been united, adoption travel completed and the family returns home, as with all new families, an attempt to establish a routine begins. For some families, China quickly becomes a distant and not always fond memory – a complicated "foreign" place that symbolizes the relatively unique way in which their family was born. For others, their adoption memories of China become both a challenge and an opportunity. Based on the advice of adoption agencies, psychologists, and family support groups who address identity concerns associated with assimilationist approaches to adoption, parents widely acknowledge the need to address "the Chinese experience" and "Chinese culture" within the context of their transnational family, but to what extent and in what ways remains unclear. As I discussed in Chapter 2, prior to traveling to China, most parents have already discussed the ways in which they expect their families will address the "China question" as part of the pre-adoption preparation and homestudy requirements. However, as parents reenter the United States, their expectations may change as

they are faced with the reality of scheduling Chinese language classes, attending events in the Chinese-American community, etc. into family schedules that are often very tightly arranged.

Following a brief overview of ideas about Chinese diaspora, this chapter examines three critical areas used by parents, agencies and scholars for the exchange of ideas about the integration of Chinese culture into the family and notions of "Chineseness": 1) the Korean "model" of international adoption; 2) family support (groups, workshops, products, etc.); and 3) virtual space such as adoption related websites and listserves. Ultimately, these three areas provide a framework for situating U.S.-Chinese transnational adoptive families because they draw upon broader notions of adoption and kinship, and identity and migration within the context of diaspora and the global Chinese family in late-capitalism. Because of the perceived racial difference, adoptive Chinese children and their white middle-class parents are not readily identified participants in a Chinese diaspora – one very much grounded in historical notions of "race" that will be discussed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, as Chinese immigrants, participation in the Chinese-American community could prove invaluable to adoptees as they grow older. Consequently, this chapter asks in what way notions of third space cultures, identity politics and Chinese diaspora may interact with the transnational adoption experience.

3.2 THE SCATTERING OF SEEDS: TRANSNATIONALISM, DIASPORA AND "CHINESENESS"

There are many ways in which "Chineseness" can be understood. Andrea Louie addresses contested notion of Chineseness in her ethnography, *Chineseness across Borders* (2004). Louie examines the ways in which Americans of Chinese descent experience identity as they return to

China on "roots" tours and culture camps sponsored by the P.R.C. Louie argues that she is a "'living oxymoron' who fits neither into the category of 'foreigner' nor 'Chinese [though she is 'racially'] a 'descendant of the dragon by virtue of [her] black hair and yellow skin" (2004:14-15). Clearly for Louie, "race" in the sense of Asian physiognomy is an insufficient marker to be "fully" Chinese. Rather, she sees "Chineseness" as something that can "be stretched to include the many people of the diaspora, and at other times to distinguish one group within the category from another;" for example, Chinese from the Chinese-American Other (2004:21). Moreover, she "takes Chineseness to be an open signifier, a fluid and contested category that encompasses a diversity of political, 'racial,' and ethnic meanings within shifting and varied contexts" (2004:21).

While Louie addresses the particular ways in which Chinese-Americans, and U.S. and Chinese government projects negotiate the construction of "Chineseness," other scholars have addressed the broader notion of diaspora from a variety of perspectives – including displacement, victimization and sacrifice, cultural struggles, and cultural hybridity (Ong 1999). As I discussed in the introduction, many scholars acknowledge that diasporas are inherently transnational in that they link the global and local and "have the potential to unsettle static, essentialist and totalitarian conceptions of 'national culture' and 'national identity' which are firmly rooted in history and geography"(Ang 1993:13). Moreover, they challenge the hegemony of a "mythic homeland" even while they emphasize ties to that homeland (Chow 1991). Ang envisions a conception of diasporas that addresses the tension between the notions of "where you are from" and "where you are at" that results in a "creative syncretism" that seeks to reconcile these different cultural perspectives and through this process yields hybrid cultural forms (Ang, 1993: 13; van der Veer, 1995).

While this understanding of transnational communities stresses that "culture" may be produced as well as lost in this process, the nature of a syncretic and hybrid culture is, like core-

periphery and center-margin paradigms, dichotomous and therefore problematic.[21] Furthermore, transnational communities are indicative of the problems of representation and identity construction that are attendant to the time-space compression created as places move closer together within a new space of flows resulting from electronic media and transportation innovations (Harvey 1974). Consequently, Featherstone's conception of a "third culture" that functions within a "third space" more effectively captures the tensions and resistance inherent in negotiating this process (Featherstone, 1990, Ong and Nonini, 1997). Furthermore, as Yeoh and Willis note, it is critical to acknowledge that third space diasporic journeys are not merely de facto points of resistance, but rather, as *new* spaces, they may also be appropriated by conservative forces such as the state (Yeoh and Willis, 1999:13). The importance of this distinction becomes clearer in looking at the interconnectedness of the various parties involved in Chinese-U.S. transnational adoptions, especially state and family, in examining the politics of cultural identities and self representation and the strategies that are utilized by adopting parents and will be utilized by adoptees as they grow older (Hall, 1990).

Although scholars have long been interested in the topic of migration, they have recently become increasingly attentive to the impact of transnationalism and globalization on definitions of modernity and identity and have further emphasized the need for incorporating political economy approaches at the local as well as at the global level (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Appadurai, 1995; Anagnost, 1997; Constable, 2001; Gao, 1998; Ong, 1999). The term globalization is typically used to refer to international economic forces; however, Ong's use of the term

[21] Core-periphery models, developed by Wallerstein and others, are political economy approaches that examine the exercise of power and "shift attention from communities bounded within nations, and from nations themselves to spaces of which nations are components" (Kearney, 1995: 549). The center-minor relationship was developed by Rey Chow to explain the positionality of minorities within a community (Zhong, 1999, p.120).

transnationalism has a broader dimension that addresses social processes which literally act across nation-states and thus transcend conventional geographic and social boundaries (Ong, 1999). In this way, the Chinese experience can illustrate the inadequacies of earlier scholarly approaches to migration.

> If one adhered to the earlier paradigm of overseas Chinese studies in which to be Chinese 'overseas' was to be part of an imperfect residual China, diaspora might be seen as a negatively defined and inferior phenomenon. But [there] is an affirmative view of diaspora as a pattern that marks a common condition of communities, persons and groups separated by space, an arrangement, moreover that these persons see themselves as sharing ('we Chinese'). This pattern is continually reconstituted by the literal travel of Chinese persons across and throughout the regions of dispersion, and it is characterized by multiplex and varied connections of family ties, kinship, commerce, sentiments and values about native place in China, shared memberships in transnational organizations and so on. (Ong and Nonini 1997:18).

Ong argues that in an age of capital mobility, the state has established new relationships with citizens and noncitizens, creating a flexible citizenry whose "transnational practices and imaginings" (promoted by global technologies, such as the Internet) reflect a realignment of cultural identities that are both promoted by the state and outside of it (Ong, 1999). In her discussion of adult Korean adoptees, Eleana Kim argues that Ong's notion of postcolonial hybrid subjects may be "more compelling in theory than in practice" because of the alienation and disorientation experienced by many adult adoptees (Kim 2005). However, my research indicates that the rapidly growing Chinese-U.S. transnational and transracial adoptive families, unlike their earlier Korean counterparts, represent a new form of realigned cultural identities that utilize technologies and the state to construct an "imagined" model of the family that will have a unique relationship with Chinese communities in the United States and a particular perspective on "Chineseness."

3.3 THE KOREAN MODEL

> The Korean Adoption Experience: A Look into Our [China adoption] Future? (Gorman 1995).
>
> I love my parents dearly . . . but they didn't get that they were contributing to my becoming a wreck inside," said Mi Ok Song Bruining, 38, an artist from Cambridge. (http://www.adoptionnation.com/bosglobe_9-12-1999.htm)
>
> there are some aspects of their society they'd prefer we'd not examine so closely, and one of those concerns the exportation of Korean orphans for adoption abroad. NBC Sports broadcaster. - Bryant Gumbel during the 1988 Olympic games (Pertman 2000:226)

Since 1954, over 200,000 children have left Korea to be adopted in another country (Kim 2005). Given the large number of adoptees and the relatively long history of transnational adoption, Korean adoptees are in a position to share a great deal of experience with the broader adoption community, and in recent years, many have proved willing to do just that. Korean adoption is often considered to be a "natural" model for Chinese adoption because both are developing Asian countries with a patriarchal, Confucian history who have allowed large numbers of children to be adopted by white middle-class parents in the United States and other Western countries, particularly Canada, Australia, and parts of Western Europe. The number of Korean adoptions have declined since the early 1980s due to limits placed by the South Korean government on the number of children it will allow to leave for international adoption and due to policies designed to encourage domestic adoption. As of 2005, nevertheless, Korea still places a

considerable number of children for adoption in the United States.[22] In addition, adult Korean adoptees have "pioneered" many widespread ideas and practices in the transnational adoption community and are often now serving as advisors and consultants as parents and agencies continue to rethink adoption policy and practice (Kim 2005:59).

In 1976, North Korea soundly critiqued South Korean international adoption policies in economic terms by mocking South Korean children as the government's latest "export" (Sarri 1998). In response, South Korea instituted the Five Year Plan for Adoption and Foster care that ushered in specific policies aimed at curbing international adoption by encouraging domestic adoption and foster care programs. In many ways, 1988, the year South Korea hosted the Summer Olympics, proved to be a watershed for Korean adoptees when the attention paid South Korea also brought to light the "adoption problem." At that time, a considerable amount of press coverage focused on concerns of the commodification and exploitation of children, with international adoption increasingly being framed as a form of trafficking of children. Susan Soon-Keum Cox a Korean adoptee now working with the HOLT agency explained that, "It was terribly painful and humiliating for the government and the Korean people" and the attention led to both progressive reforms and a ten percent reduction in the numbers of orphans placed for overseas adoption, with a complete halt of overseas adoption in 1996 (Pertman 2000:227).[23]

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[22] As of 2005, the fourth largest number of orphan immigrant visas issued to the U.S. is for S. Korean Adoptees (KAD). S. Korea has a 2005 total of 1,630 visas (http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/stats/stats_451.html). According to http://www.geocities.com/sunny_jo888/kadfacts.html, a site that indexes KAD statistics, the Ministry of Health of Korea reported in 2002 that an approximate total of 200,000 Korean children have been adopted internationally since 1955. Of that 200,000, 120,000 have gone to the United States and Canada, 10,000 to Australia and the remaining 70,000 to Europe (with large numbers being adopted in France, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Belgium and Germany). I have seen other statistics as well which report roughly the same numbers. A direct accounting from the Korean Ministry of Health was unavailable at this time.

[23] Reforms included upgrading institutional conditions, promoting birth control and urging more local adoptions.

In her work on Korean adoption and identity, Eleana Kim, has written an important and engaging ethnographic account of two key events for adult Korean adoptees, the Gathering of the First Generation of Korean Adoptees in 1999 and the Overseas Korea Foundation 2001 program of "Summer Cultural Awareness Training Program for Overseas Adopted Koreans." The Gathering, with Susan Soon-Keum Cox at the helm, was organized by and for adoptees and sponsored workshops which "complicated the meanings of … 'success' with attendees sharing intimate and painful memories of Korea, their childhoods in America, and the negative experiences of living in a white culture with a 'white' name and family but an Asian physiognomy" (Kim 2005:65). Kim argues that heritage tours aimed at encouraging adult adoptees to return to their "Motherland" are important components in the state's refashioning of a global Korean family that draws on a new sense of "Koreaness" that incorporates adoptees raised in primarily white middle-class Western families. Ironically, this interpretation of a global Korean family ultimately calls upon adoptees to "forget" the same memories of loss that tie them to the same place they are exhorted to return. In short, the South Korean government has situated adoptees within a larger national project that sees "overseas Koreans [as] integrated into a modern hierarchically structured Korean 'family' [which serves as] productive links between South Korea and the global economy" (Kim 2005:64).

Adult adoptee, Mi Ok Song Bruining, who was adopted from Korea in 1965 at the age of five, raised in the United States, and is now a poet and social worker concerned with adoption and assimilation issues, has discussed the personal nature of her adoption and the way in which she was made to feel ashamed of her heritage. She says that although her adoptive parents were good people whom she loves, they stressed that orphaned girls who remained in Korea faced inevitable prostitution or menial labor (Snowbeck 2001). Perhaps the greatest problem described

by Korean adoptees is an assimilationist, or "clean break" approach (Fonseca 2005), to transracial adoption. This sentiment was also expressed on the front page of Eurasian Nation, a web page dealing with Eurasian identity issues. As one Korean adoptee wrote, "My parents always tried to downplay [my Korean heritage], and teach me that I was no different from anyone else, meaning that I was 'as good as white.'" http://forums.yellowworld.org/archive/index.php/t-7752.html. This unsatisfactory encounter with multiculturalism has been described by many adult Korean adoptees (Cox 1999), and it has inspired the community of China scholars, adoption agencies, and parents to promote cultural integration, and acknowledgment of difference into a new notion of "global family." Nevertheless, contemporary approaches that acknowledge difference (as opposed to the dated metaphor of the "melting pot") have not resolved inadequate salvation narratives, or erased images of abandonment and "lost daughters".[24] Instead, they have contributed to a new essentialized image of adoptive Chinese daughters that, like its Korean predecesor, is often seen as an orientalizing project.

While scholars, adoption activists and parents have identified important ways in which the experiences of both Korean and Chinese adoptees may overlap, the temptation to use the Korean experience as a model and roadmap of sorts in examining issues facing the newer wave of Chinese transnational adoptees should be approached with some caution because important differences remain. Hubinette states that "Adopted Koreans are for me truly a unique group

[24] In the 1970s, the reigning metaphor for assimilationist identity approaches was the melting pot. Here, native cultures were considered as key ingredients in a U.S. identity that was universal and did not reveal its ingredients. This approach has been widely critiqued because of the sense of loss native culture associated with this kind of assimilation. The problems associated with assimilationist models led to a new metaphor of the "salad bowl", in which all ingredients are combined harmoniously but retain their discrete and recognizable properties. However, this metaphor is also rather simplistic.. Ultimately, notions of transnationalism and transmigration, more effectively capture the subtleties of a multi-directional phenomenon such as transnational adoption.

transgressing categories of race, citizenship, language, religion and culture" (2004:22).[25] Chinese adoptees also constitute a unique group. They hail from a nation-state with the world's largest single population which, unlike nearly all other sending countries, have not fallen directly under the U.S. sphere of influence (in contrast to Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, the Philippines and Guatemala). Unlike any other group, Chinese adoptees are overwhelmingly gendered female, and this gendered notion of abandonment has become a significant "hallmark" of their constructed cultural identity in the United States. Lastly, Chinese adoptees have access to a wide variety of communities – both "real" (including the largest and most extensive diaspora community) and "imagined". Future research within the community of adopted Chinese children will reveal further differences and similarities between the experience of Korean and more recent Chinese adoptees.

3.4 FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS & CULTURAL IDENTITY

> We have something in common. Both of our daughter's adoption days are very close to their birthdays, but [one] is much closer. [The other daughter's] adoption day is a month before her birthday.
>
> We celebrated [the] first adoption day by having a special

[25] Tobias Hubinette is a doctoral candidate in Korean Studies at the University of Stockholm, Sweden. His research addresses notions of adopted Koreans and the development of identity in the "third space." His position is interesting because he is also an adopted Korean, raised in Sweden. In addition, he is a contributor to the website, www.transracialabductees.com, that defines itself as "angry, pissed, ungrateful little transracially abducted motherfuckers from hell." On this website, Hubinette uses his Korean name of Lee Sam-dol . Though he does not give any insight into his personal history with his adoption or adoptive parents, he does discuss the politics of adoption within the context of a history of colonialism. The site refers to adoption as abduction because of the "unequal power between abductees and abductors" who are white and represented by strong white governments and adoption industry. Moreover, he equates the process of children of color being raised by a white families as a racist system of assimilation and brainwashing.

> dinner out at a family restaurant (Something we don't do very often these days) then we came home and watched our adoption video. As we watched we all talked about our time in China and how important that day was and why we are celebrating it. It was a very special day; no gifts necessary. When [our other daughter] is older we plan to allow her to pick the activity that day as long as we can all do it as a family. We don't plan to give gifts; we'll leave them for birthdays and other traditional gift-giving holidays.
>
> - New Jersey Mom, 8/9/06

> Our Gotcha Day is August 9th, this will be our second Gotcha Day celebration, and we have planned a dinner out with Sarah to celebrate, somewhere she'll enjoy of course. She's 3 years old. I was planning to get her some sort of Chinese themed gift, but I haven't ordered anything yet. I was too busy planning her kid birthday party which we had on August 2nd and planning for her birthday which is tomorrow August 5th and I didn't plan ahead in time to prepare for Gotcha Day. Last year I got her a Chinese doll. Do you have any ideas of a present I could get for her at the last minute that would still be meaningful in some way for gotcha day? She is overloaded with birthday presents at the moment, so I was looking for something distinctly Chinese but doesn't have to be anything big, just something she'd like.
>
> - Minnesota Mom 8/8/06

As a result of the Korean experience, many U.S. adoption agencies such as Holt International (the founder of postwar intercountry adoption), La Vida and Adoptions from the Heart (large agencies that specialize in intercountry adoption) and support groups with interests in adoptee identity issues (e.g., Families with Children from China), now advocate greater degrees of cultural integration. However, for parents with little or no exposure to their child's cultural heritage this is a difficult goal to achieve. In an attempt to help parents, these groups often sponsor workshops to provide background on Chinese culture. Unfortunately, the brevity of these workshops makes them vulnerable to essentialized, simplified American representations of Chinese culture that cannot adequately address the multiple and varied Chinese perspectives. In

terms of the adoption process, this kind of cultural production, however problematic, is revealing of many different assumptions and misunderstandings that face transnational adoptive families.

Returning to Khan's analysis of Muslim women living in a diaspora community in Canada, whom she argues face the reductionist identification of "Muslim Woman" one may see how Chinese girls adopted by U.S. parents, having left their homeland and their extended family networks behind, depend on day-to-day practices to develop social identities. However, unlike the relatively isolated community of Muslim women, many adoptees often have a chance to participate in adoptive playgroups, support groups, language classes, summer camps, and return trips "home." It is through this type of "process and knowledge" that "particular communities are defined" and cultural identities constructed (Khan 1998: 489).

This "real life" ideal is consistent with diasporic theoretical approaches that situate migrations within an on-going context of multiple trajectories for which the language of immigration and assimilation is inadequate (Yeoh and Willis 1999:2). However, for parents with little or no exposure to their child's cultural heritage, this goal requires special conscious effort. For example in 2002, I was invited to be a speaker for a workshop sponsored by the local chapter of Families with Children from China which was assigned the title of "A typical day in China." The co-speaker was a Chinese woman who discussed festivals and holidays. Many parents were aware that the broad and essentialized nature of these workshops is problematic. However, due to the constraints and demands of daily life of U.S. families, U.S. parents lack a vehicle to more fully examine the socio-cultural context that they *imagine* as the foundation of their new daughter's early life. Consequently, it is through support groups such as Families with Children from China that the parents hope to create a community of adoptees, a new type of overseas Chinese community, whose faces, migrations, and *parents'* memories of the adoption trip, as

opposed to their own lived experiences and memories, carry their heritage and links to an imagined homeland.

In her examination of cyber communities of adoptive parents, Ann Anagnost identifies the ways in which parents, desiring Chinese "culture", draw upon sound bites and known cultural signifiers (such as dragon dances, moon cakes, panda bears and Chinese zodiac symbols), performances and relationships with Chinese in what she terms "culture bites" (Anagnost 2000). Clearly, immigrant Chinese parents in the United States also draw upon similar signifiers, however, these parents are simultaneously contextualizing these culture bites within their personal experiences, family histories and understandings of China as a homeland. Although Anagnost is not interested in the authenticity of culture bites per se, she does explore their role in "articulating complexly racializing discourses that are not entirely unrelated to determining the hierarchy of preferred places of origin for adopted children" (2000:412). In other words, perceptions of Chinese culture on the part of U.S. parents does play a role in their decision to adopt from a given nation or population. In the case of China, these culture bites contribute more directly to the stereotyped images of a "model" minority. This aspect of cultural identification is important and will be examined in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. However, the notion of culture bites is useful here in examining the ways in which parents are laying the ground work for a performance of third culture – normalizing images of their relatively unique form of kinship of families "just like theirs" (Fry 2003) and creating a real community as a buffer and resource for their daughters. The process through which this happens, and the "cultural" choices parents make, are particularly important as they participate in a highly commodified process that both mirrors and challenges biological kinship models. Ultimately, although she does not explore the issue, Anagnost emphasizes that there is no value in attempting to authenticate culture bites. Assuming one could

justify something so subjective and contested, what would it show? Certainly it would not be novel to discover that white middle-class U.S. parents did not make the same choices as their Chinese counterparts. However, what is important about the choices adoptive parents make in selecting and celebrating Chinese culture bites is the ways in which they are "packaged." Only positive images are selected and, though they are designed to be a source of power, inspiration and self-confidence for children, complex conflicting symbols, such as the red thread imagery, have been incorporated into a simple U.S. "feel good" commodity culture (Cohen 2003; Volkman 2005).

While small children certainly need age appropriate discussions of their background, many of the ways in which their adoption experience is reconstructed through the adoption community does not address their sense of loss at all. For example, in addition to the red thread imagery which inspired the title of this dissertation, "gotcha days" celebrations are frequently celebrated by adoptive families. These days literally commemorate the anniversary of the day when parent and child were first united in China. However, the complexity inherent in the concept of an anniversary that typically commemorates the joys and trials of a life together are overlooked by "gotcha days." Some parents are uncomfortable with this term and feel it is excessively "cute" and overly simplistic and may "celebrate" that day with time together or a charitable donation. However, many other parents embrace the notion and treat "gotcha days" more as a (re)birthday in which "forever" families were born and the child's destiny fulfilled. These kinds of celebrations typically include small parties and gifts that parents hope will create a happy and comfortable way for adoptees to frame the way in which they came to their adoptive family.

In general, the "cute" and highly commodified packaging of this form of adoption exemplified by "gotcha" days, "red thread girls" and other related images, belies much of the pain that is associated with the early stages of adoption. For example, adoption social worker Karen Friedman, cautions new parents in Beijing that regardless of the excitement and happiness they may feel when they first meet their child, the emotions their child is experiencing are fear, anxiety and loss (Friedman, personal communication). In fact Friedman says that, from the child's vantage point, the experience is very similar to a kidnapping as they have left the only home they've ever known and are in the care of complete strangers.

While older children are sometimes adopted, the vast majority of Chinese adoptees are infants or toddlers who are unable to comprehend their new circumstances. For these children, crying is an inevitable part of the experience. Some children cry for days as they slowly begin to adjust to their new caretakers and surroundings. While many parents are eager to forget these early signs of distress, these tears and feelings of loss are an important early indicator of the child's ability to attach to their the new adoptive family. Parents are taught that the child's distress at the loss of early emotional bonds is an important indicator of their ability to forge new bonds. Child psychologists and pediatricians widely acknowledge that the children most vulnerable to attachment disorders are those who exhibit no sense of loss and may even seem relatively happy and content.

Despite the controversy with regard to the notion of "gotcha days," this particular type of experience has become a prominent presence in the adoption community and, like many aspects of the adoption experience, is reified in a consumer culture that favors exclusively positive, cute and engaging consumption of items such as mugs, teddy bears, and Asian products such as red thread bracelets, over a more complicated appreciation of that event.

3.5 PURCHASING "NORMAL"

> Generally, adoptive parents are white, upper middle class, well educated and prepared to spend on anything 'remotely related to the child and the sense of family', said Dr. Judith Lee, executive director of Advocates for Adoption…. 'They have waited so long to be parents, and they are so thrilled that they probably overbuy.' Ellin: 2003:54

> While it is easy to parody the compulsion to consume (to spend lavishly on Asian dolls or to search the Web for panda pajamas) or to scorn the superficiality of a celebratory multiculturalism, many parents strive for some deeper transformation of their own identities and lives. (Volkman 2005:95).

> But yesterday, at Sesame Place, for the first time, we were presented with the unanswerable... someone who made a comment deliberately to be overheard, but looking the other way. This guy said to his wife, "I wonder if it's fashionable in China to have an English baby.
>
> - Segment of online conversation.

A stated goal of FCC and other support groups is to establish communities based on "families like ours" and, through the constructions of narratives and commodity consumption, assert a presence that can quite literally refashion U.S. kinship. An important part of support available to transnational adoptive U.S.-Chinese families are the number of products available that explicitly recognize them as a distinct demographic and deal with the subject of cultural integration. U.S. adoptive parents of Chinese daughters, many of whom are of age to harness the political and economic clout held by "baby-boomer" consumers, have been especially active in addressing cultural concerns and actively promoting both the needs and images of adoptive transnational families. The parents' response is particularly visible in looking at the adoption narratives they have constructed and the recent spate of children's literature which has been published specifically for Chinese adoptees and their families. Books such as, An Mei's Strange and Wondrous Journey (Molnar-Fenton 1998), I Love You Like Crazy Cakes (Lewis 2001), Mommy Near, Mommy Far (Peacock 2000), When You Were Born in China (Dorow 1998), and

The White Swan Express (Okimoto and Aoki 2002) have all been published within the last seven years and are designed to normalize images of transnational and transracial adoptive families and to reassure the children of their Chinese roots, loving birth parents and a "wondrous journey." Over the last few years, pre-teen Chinese adoptees have begun to construct their own narratives, again with the aid and encouragement of their white middle-class parents. As Volkman argues, the broken narrative of adoption and the loss of biological parents that are associated with that narrative is lost to both adoptive parents and child. Bites of affirming aspects of Chinese culture and images and narratives of adoption that help to institutionalize this form of kinship are important ways to address the *longings* associated with adoption related loss. In addition, they provide one venue through which the "broken" birth narrative can be revitalized (Volkman 2005).

Although many adoption stories and products do address the particular and unique experience of adoption, they also serve to incorporate adoptive parents into the broader patterns of material culture and consumption that are key to the social process of parenting (biological or adoptive). In this way, parenting is not just a biological phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon rooted in desire and expressed through material culture and the "acquisition of things" (Clarke 2004:55). Beginning with "Barbara Rothman's Recreating Motherhood (1989), a growing literature around motherhood, capitalism, and consumer culture has similarly highlighted the dyadic relations of commodities/markets and infants (Zelizer 1994; Layne 1999; Taylor 2000)" (Clarke 2004:55). Given that adoptive parents still largely model their experience on an "as if" biological model, their parental desires are also expressed in the marketplace and the availability of goods designed especially for them is confirmation that their parenting is valued, and legitimate.

While parents and others in the adoption community sense that the ways in which advertisers and businesses of all kinds have taken notice of transnational adoptive families is one way in which their "different" families can be treated as if biological families, they are only now beginning to doubt that the marketplace they so long sought to be acknowledged by does not serve as a very effective equalizer for families. While the ability to purchase products that acknowledge their families can be helpful and comforting, in other ways it may prove confusing and even hurtful.

David Eng uses a 2000 advertising campaign by John Hancock in his approach to queer diasporas and transnational adoption. He describes the ad, which prominently features a lesbian couple adopting an Asian baby, and questions,

> Given the long U.S. history of Chinese immigration exclusion and bars to naturalization and citizenship, and given the recent public outcry and legal repudiation of gay and lesbian parenting, we must pause to wonder exactly what John Hancock, one of the world's largest financial services companies, is seeking to insure. How does this depiction of transnational adoption and circuits of (human) exchange not only resignify past and present histories of exploited Asian immigrant labor but also situate the adoption of Chinese baby girls by an emerging consumer niche group—white lesbians with capital—as one of the late twentieth century's most privileged forms of immigration? (Eng 2003:7).

Eng later questions the multiple meanings of "financial protection", which, like the notion of the "best interests of the child" can be problematic concepts when intersecting with race and class. While I will return to Eng's question of race and privileged immigration in Chapter 4, here I would like to address Eng's concerns with the ways Chinese-U.S. transnational adoptive families constitute an "emerging consumer niche." Eng describes the backlash towards this kind of advertising. While he is primarily focused on the "immediate right-wing outrage" towards the mainstream image of gay parents, he also briefly addresses concerns within the adoption community that Chinese authorities would reject gay parents as well (Eng 2003:8).

After protests from right-wing conservatives, the commercial was reedited without the final exchange about being great mothers. In addition, "fearing reprisals from Chinese authorities that lesbians were "snatching up" Chinese infants, John Hancock added an audio track stating that a flight from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, had just arrived (Eng 2003:36).[26] Importantly, despite (minimal) changes to the ad, Chinese authorities did take notice and begin to curtail single mother adoptions. In 2004, they added an additional requirement for all single applicants who must now submit a signed and notarized letter from their employer stating that the employee is heterosexual. In 2006, several additional restrictions were announced regarding determining eligibility for adoption. These changes will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, however it is important to note here that one of these changes eliminates all single applicants. These new steps are part of an extensive process of building transnational families that marks these families as distinct from biological families and thus they do not fit with an "as if" biological model. With transnational adoption, the high degree of regulation on the part of the state and international bodies such as the Hague ensure that adoptive parents are surveilled and licensed in sharp contrast to the "natural" biological parent.

3.6 LOST DAUGHTERS – "FOUND"

In the 2005 publication of Cultures of Transnational Adoption, an important discussion of adoptees returning to their "roots" began (e.g. Kim; Volkman; Yngvesson). While Chinese adoptees are only now of an age to begin return trips to China in earnest, clearly their

[26] As Eng suggests, see "Hancock Ad Raises Alarm in Adoption Communities," *Wall Street Journal*, 14 September 2000.

experiences will inform ideas about diaspora and third space cultures. For the moment, other participants in organizing return trips, notably both the Chinese and U.S. governments, adoption agencies and parents in the United States and caretakers in China, may reveal much about the shaping of the experience of return.

In 2002, I met a mother and her seven year old daughter adopted from Guangzhou, and they were planning a return visit to Katie's first home, a large SWI on the outskirts of Guangzhou. This idea of return is beginning to have real resonance in the adoption community as some girls are now old enough to be interested in both China, their early caretakers, and the current children in residence. The group had one afternoon to travel freely and pursue their individual interests, be it shopping, family reunions or Katie's return visit. Katie and her mom, Ellie, and their friend, Diane, were committed to the visit but were facing some logistical obstacles and so they approached me as a translator and travel aid. One key problem was that they wanted to phone the welfare institute to arrange a visit. However, this was not possible because it was Sunday and the office was not staffed. Ultimately, we got the address from the hotel and had a very friendly and helpful cab driver who was able to locate the SWI which, like many others, was designed to be private and not particularly well known, even to locals. It was this visit and the subsequent reaction on the part of the SWI staff and officials that illustrated the ways in which the state, through transnational adoption, was realigning its imagined global future.

First, when we arrived at the SWI with no appointment, I expected we would have problems getting past the guard at the door. His reaction could not have been more surprising. An older man, he was initially surprised but relatively uninterested in our visit – until he realized that Katie had come from this SWI and was returning home. He became very excited and called to other staff walking by, "She's back!" They too became very receptive to our visit. After

apologizing and explaining the problems that led to our unannounced arrival, we were introduced to the resident manager who greeted us warmly. She was not concerned or suspicious, as might have been the case but years earlier, but rather she was comfortable with arranging a brief visit to the infant area in which Katie had lived for roughly her first year. Katie was treated as a long-lost relative and, although she was seven, there was one caretaker in particular who clearly remembered her and her adoptive parents. Katie's mother was revisiting memories and a place she had left seven years earlier as a very new and excited parent. Katie, frankly, seemed bewildered; only time will tell what this return meant to her. Nevertheless, the staff was eager for her to join them, for her to try speaking Chinese and to see her "roots." It became clear from photo projects displayed on the walls that the SWI had been working with volunteers to create memory books for the children and they had countless letters and photos from parents who had kept in touch with them. These relationships and mementos highlighted the ways in which they had expanded their notion of family, and this had brought them into the global economy and network of NGOs in ways that had been impossible as recently as the late 1980s. Katie's return was an important example of how attitudes in large SWIs, which had gradually grown accustomed to dealing with Western parents, agencies and NGOs, had changed from several years ago.

While Kim and others have begun to look at ways in which adoptees and the state often clash with regard to discourses on "roots" and "return" in Korea (Kim 2005), Katie's experience illustrates a return of a very different sort. Her return to Guangzhou highlights the ways in which her Chinese caretakers certainly include her in their vision of a global Chinese community and a daughter returned to China.

3.7 VIRTUAL SPACE

> What forms of expression does the Internet make possible that may be inexpressible by any other means? In this sense, Internet communications allegorize the process of globalization itself in which transnational adoption becomes a feasible means to form families and speaks to the larger issue of new formations of desire (Anagnost 2000:389).

> Adoptions from China began at the same time that the virtual community was becoming a part of the daily life of many Americans. This directly and dramatically impact[ed] the adoption process. It influenced the connection of adoptive families to the agency facilitating the adoption, the children they were adopting and most of all the connection of adoptive parents to each other. While families adopting from China certainly did not invent international adoption, they did to a large degree pioneer virtual communities for themselves (Volkman 2005:87)

So far I have addressed the ways in which notions of family, race and culture have been historically and spatially bounded and firmly rooted in connections, *longings,* memories and ideals of "roots" and "home." The image of China as a "mythic homeland" continues to loom large in the adoption community and the ways in which adoptees are racialized in the United States. However, the Internet has provided a deterritorialized forum for discussion that provides opportunities to maintain anonymity and distance while simultaneously providing a great degree of intimacy. As Constable notes, cyber conversations are something between written correspondence and personal conversation. While lacking the body language and immediacy of face to face meetings, forums such as chat rooms, websites, blogs and list serves can allow for archiving and easy indexing in a democratic and unreserved space. (Constable 2003).

The rise in Chinese adoptions has closely paralleled the rise of the cyber communities and the burgeoning of both phenomenon makes their relationship particularly compelling. Adoptive parents have used the Internet in many important ways, including intersecting with several different kinds of services and communities ranging from Chinese schools, publishers, aid organizations, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and adoption agencies. They have also

established two widely subscribed list serves that are formed under Yahoo groups: PAC (Post Adopt China) and APC (Adoptive Parents China). While parents use PAC for a variety of reasons, including advertising related goods and services, exchanging medical and educational information, and venting frustrations, I was most interested in the frequent and often contested threads addressing identity and Chinese culture. For many parents, this is simply an extension of participating in family support groups - Families with Children from China local chapters frequently advertise events, New Year's parties, fund-raisers and so forth. For other parents, it is a means to remain current with both recent events in China and adoption policy and networks. One recurring theme that highlights the intersection of these two issues is abandonment. An important discussion of the term "abandonment" occurred in 2005 on a China adoption listserv. The conversation stayed active for some time and incorporated critiques of both popular and scholarly opinions on abandonment, "love", abortion and adoption. The thread began when John posted regarding his refusal to use the term "abandonment" and his decision to unequivocally explain to his children that the birth parent(s) did love his daughter. He wrote:

> In 99% of cases, then, the so-called abandonment was an act of love and it is highly probable that they were given up, left to be found as a desperate act of love. After all, these babies were carried to full term.

While there were many and varied responses, two important ones were the following. They expressed the frustration many parents felt with the notion that any baby not aborted was "loved" and that they should (mis) represent the ways in which their child was abandoned and eventually found. Respondent 1 writes:

> Carrying the baby to term can't be equated with an act of love unless there is ready availability of gender testing and abortion is permitted for gender selection. If this is the case in China, those are facts of which I was unaware, and I'd like to know as it might alter my opinion in this area. Further say that placing the child to be found rather than

> committing infanticide is proof of love seems like a leap. Passive abandonment over active infanticide doesn't equate to love at all to me.

They also argued that “sugar coating” the truth denied their children a legitimate expression of sadness and loss. Respondent 2 writes:

> You say we as parents have to "correct their mistaken thinking"...and I could NOT disagree more strongly. What they feel and think about THEIR experiences belong to them. They own this experience…I would have to say that any negative feelings my girls have expressed over their own life experience they are very entitled to. I support them, I empathize with them, I hold them and love them through their pain. I let them know that I think they are right -- it does SUCK!

Response from original poster, John:

> Conversely, to simply lay it on the table about how and where they were left (regardless of whether that leaving is described as "abandoned" or "left to be found"), without providing any context as to the circumstances, also would be a serious mistake. In my opinion, we need to lay out alternative possible/plausible/probable scenarios as to why children (in the impersonal) are left to be found in China, and to state quite clearly (based on either what we know or have considered) what is the most likely case in their personal situation. In any event, to leave a child with any negative feelings about their birth family is, to my mind, destructive to the child's own self-worth. I am not saying to put a positive spin on everything, but to state realistically what the most-probable situation was and to place the birth family in proper perspective. Then, I agree with you, we can become a sounding board as and when the topic arises again, guiding their thinking along the most appropriate path.
>
> Maybe we are thinking along the same lines, but I just wanted to clarify my own thoughts about it. And, to come back to my original point of this thread, I think it is destructive to use the word "abandoned". This is not sugar coating. It is protecting a developing psyche from what I firmly consider to be the absolutely incorrect connotation. It is extremely important, for a child's self worth and sense of being, that they feel objectively positive about themselves and their origins.

Ultimately, unlike domestic adoptions in which “open” adoption is increasingly common, for Chinese-U.S. transnational adoptions, adoption and abandonment are inextricably linked. In

order for a child to be legally eligible for transnational adoption, both the U.S. and Chinese governments and the Hague treaties require the child be legally declared "abandoned." While there is certainly stigma attached to the word abandonment, the governing bodies insist on this declaration in an attempt to protect parents and child from corruption, baby-selling and so forth. Ironically, though parents may dislike using the term abandonment, the success of their adoption demands that it be used to express their child's situation.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Because they are children, adoptees have left homeland and extended family networks behind, but without a conscious decision to do so, and often without their own memories of China. Consequently, their understanding of being "Chinese" is dependent on day-to-day practices such as participation in adoptive playgroups, support groups, language classes, and adoption travel. Ultimately, I argue that this conscious use of contemporary forms of globalization, in combination with the highly gendered population of children available for intercountry adoption, have created a distinct and unique migration that constitutes a very special diasporic community in which adoptive parents attempt to both embrace and mediate the daughters' cultural background and identity. In addition, because of the recent and rapid increase in the phenomenon of adoption of orphaned Chinese girls by U.S. parents, adoptive Chinese girls have been increasingly identified as a discrete community of Adoptive Chinese Girls, an identification encouraged by social workers and agencies, adoption policy and parents who, largely in response to the perceived failures of previous approaches, argue that the adoptee network may constitute a

fourth and perhaps most valuable "culture." However, these adoptees also face a reductionist identification as "Lost Daughters" – a powerful label that simultaneously represents the multiple ways (lost to their biological parents and to China – both of whom failed to value the girls) in which they were lost to China but "found" in the United States.

While transnationalism creates additional opportunities for families to be made, as Yeoh and Willis note, it is critical to acknowledge that these kinds of third space diaspora journeys are not merely de facto points of resistance, but rather *new* spaces that may also be appropriated by conservative forces such as the state (1999:13). Kim and others discuss ways in which this has proved true in the case of Korean adoptees as they experience the sometimes "stifling embrace as overseas Koreans" (2005: 53). Will this prove true for Chinese adoptees as well? The Chinese government and many others are negotiating these new spaces in an attempt to situate adoptees within their vision of the global Chinese family. For adoptive families there are unique challenges in negotiating the transnational adoption process in which the children's migration, unlike that of other types of immigrants, is arranged by forces beyond their control. In addition, the guardians of the children's cultural heritage, the adoptive parents, typically have a very different cultural background, one that is further emphasized by apparent racial difference. Consequently, parents become a filter through which the child's heritage is viewed and ultimately reinterpreted, thus potentially producing a new sense of Chinese identity in tandem with a new type of overseas community.

Future research in the area of online communities is important because of the ways in which adoptees are likely to rely on the Internet and the access it gives to a virtual "adoption nation." In addition, future research will need to ask how the mainland Chinese themselves imagine the future identities and connections of these children. Research will show how adopted

children are situated within a “third space” diaspora, by illustrating how, as they mature, they *consciously* traverse borders and identities. In this way, both mainland Chinese and the overseas adopted daughters will play a central role in defining the nature and forms of a new “third culture.”

4.0 INTERSECTING CHILDHOODS: GENDER, RACE AND CITIZENSHIP

I first came to this research when a friend relayed a conversation she had when she and her adopted Chinese daughter were in their local post-office. An older woman in line behind Dorothy and her four-year old daughter asked if Dorothy's husband was Chinese. Dorothy replied, "No" and attempted to end the conversation her daughter, then four, was old enough to understand. However, the woman pressed on and asked if she was adopted and if so, from which country. Again, Dorothy rather curtly replied, "China". Finally, the woman, looking directly at the little girl, responded, "My, she's lovely. Why can't China love its little girls?" Nearly all adoptive parents must face some form of this (and many other) very personal question that carries such profound, political connotations. This question, however well-intentioned, simultaneously calls into question Chinese cultural values and norms vis-à-vis the notion of "love" and the value of women and girls. This question is frequently asked both of parents and by parents themselves. Listservs, adoption agencies, support groups and personal conversations with parents have all addressed this theme. Many parents express outrage and concern that U.S. popular perception is that girls are not loved in China. Other parents, having seen media coverage of abandoned girls in China, feel moved to adopt themselves.

Ultimately, a seemingly straight-forward question such as, "Why can't China love its little girls?" hints at broader theoretical questions. In what ways must gender be treated, not as a

side-line to “mainstream” studies but rather as a primary mode of analysis? What are some of the multiple meanings of femininity and masculinities at play in this phenomenon? Lastly, how can a unified gendered analysis inform our understanding of both transnational adoption and child abandonment in China?

Because of these kinds of concerns, gender is a central concept in this dissertation. In subsequent chapters I examine the role of expatriate women in non-profit work, the gendered labor of Chinese welfare institutes, domestic Chinese foster parent programs, and migration. In addition the notion of “rescuing” unloved girls will be addressed in Chapter 5, Saving Children Body and Soul. This chapter examines specific ways that transnational adoption contributes to and plays upon highly commodified images of both U.S. and Chinese femininities (and by extension, masculinities) and the ways in which gender ideologies, notions of race and, modernity and development intersect at the level of national identities.

Following a brief historical overview of Chinese-U.S. migration, and background of the ways in which Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption is a highly gendered form of migration this chapter addresses the ways in which gender, treated as a primary mode of analysis, can explain seeming inconsistencies in the population of children adopted in the United States and those “waiting” in China. First I will discuss constructions and perceptions of Chinese femininities and subsequently, I will address the ways in which they overshadowed the contemporary situation of boys in China. while the abandonment of girls is most often associated with preference for boys and birth planning policies, the question remains, why are boys being abandoned? The gendered political economy of child abandonment and adoption is then discussed from the vantage point of changing “values” of children. In conclusion, I explore the intersections between gender and perceptions of race in looking at the racial politics of U.S.

domestic adoption and the recent migration of hundreds of U.S. African-American adoptees to Canada and Western Europe.

4.1 BACKGROUND

Whereas studies of the family and the post-1949 Chinese state have typically focused on state mandated birth-planning policies and how they correlate to increasing rates of infant abandonment (especially with regard to healthy females) throughout the 1990s (Greenhalgh 1994; Johnson 1998; Skinner 1998), until very recently, relatively few studies have examined the corresponding increases in international and domestic adoptions. In addition, the primary focus of U.S. parents and U.S. adoption groups has been specifically on the wave of Chinese girls being adopted into the United States and other western countries, advocating on behalf of their immigration and social status, and their socialization in their new homes (Tessler et.al. 1999; Evans 2000). While this wave of Chinese adopted girls, the so-called "lost daughters" of China,[27] and Chinese birth-planning policies remain two critical vantage points from which gender, abandonment and adoption can be discussed, emphasizing these aspects can be problematic in that they fail to address large segments of the population of orphaned and abandoned Chinese children and thus contribute to the polarized U.S. images of Chinese women as exotic, delicate victims, Chinese men as patriarchal victimizers, and altruistic "western"

[27] See Karin Evans' work entitled, *The Lost Daughters of China*, 2000.

families and a corporate Chinese counterpart.[28] Ultimately, these gendered and racialized stereotypes contribute to a highly gendered form of nationalism and neocolonialism. Said, notes that "the separateness of the Orient, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability [explained how scholars] saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption" (1978:206). This, in combination with perceptions of national ideologies, exacerbates neocolonialist images of developing "feminine" nations and developed "masculine" nations (e.g. Said 1978; Yuval-Davis 1997).

By comparison, this study of Chinese adoption allows for a holistic examination of the population of abandoned Chinese children, thus redressing some of the misconceptions and assumptions that arise from studies and popular conceptions which focus primarily on transnationally adopted children and abandoned girls.

While there are many and varied reasons that may explain why many U.S. parents have increasingly turned to China for adoptions, one key factor has been the profound increase in abandoned Chinese children following the institution of China's 1978 Four Modernization policies and birth planning policies. Although the so called "one child" policy has met with a high degree of acceptance among urban families, rural families remain more likely to reject the conception of a "modern" one-child family, and the constraints that family planning policy places on their likelihood of producing sons; at least one male offspring is often still considered necessary to maintain the family (Anagnost 1995; Johnson 1998; Skinner 1998). The vast majority of Chinese children placed for transnational adoption are female, and most come from

[28] Western families are often depicted as highly individualistic and based on altruistic notions of love (e.g. Schneider 1968; Hsu 1981; Ragone 1987). Chinese families on the other hand, are often portrayed as group oriented, corporate units that are based on patrilineages which significantly preference boys (e.g. Hsu 1981; Baker 1979; Wolf 1969).

the southeastern provinces of China, such as Guangdong and Fujian, regions that have a long history of overseas immigration (Wolf & Huang 1980). The widespread availability of girls may be seen as a reflection of the well-known and long-standing Chinese cultural preference for boys, a view that many assert still persists, especially among China's rural majority. However, my research illustrates the ways in which this conclusion is overly simplistic because it fails to distinguish between the population of transnational adoptees and the broader population of abandoned Chinese children. Whereas most transnational adoptees are girls, the population of abandoned children includes large numbers of children identified as special needs[29] and increasing numbers of healthy boys.

4.2 CHINESE-U.S. MIGRATION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

> The West has a long tradition of uprooting non-whites and transporting them involuntarily to their own countries and for their own purposes. Hundreds of thousands of non-whites, especially Africans, were transported to satisfy the need for manpower.
>
> Nowadays hundreds of thousands of non-whites, especially East Asians, are transported to the West to satisfy the needs of infertile white middle-class couples. The message of intercountry adoption is ideology is clearly that life in the West is

[29] Adoption.com provides a brief explanation of the term and its importance to the adoption industry and community which is useful here. "The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89) has focused more attention on finding homes for children with special needs and making sure they receive the post-adoption services they need. Congress enacted the law to ensure that children in foster care, who cannot be reunited with their birth parents, are freed for adoption and placed with permanent families as quickly as possible. For many people the term "special needs" means a child who receives or needs special education or who has a disability of some sort. In adoption, the term is defined differently and may include the factors listed below. Guidelines for classifying a child as "special needs" vary by State. Children with special needs range in age from infants to 18 years. In general, children with special needs are those who: Have physical or health problems, Are older, Are members of ethnic or racial minorities, Have a history of abuse or neglect, Have emotional problems, Have siblings and need to be adopted as a group, Test positive for HIV, Have documented conditions that may lead to future problems, Were prenatally exposed to drugs or alcohol."

> the best, and that the West has the right to adopt children from non-Western countries in the name of paternalistic humanis and materialistic superiority, something which reminds [one] of the pro-slavery arguments from the 19th century; by leaving war-stricken and impoverished West-Africa the slaves were considered given a better life in the New World.
>
> - Tobias Hubinette, co-found of Transracial Abductees website, Korean adoptee to Sweden and lecturer in Korean Studies at Stockholm University. Author of Comforting an Orphaned Nation.

From its inception, gender was a significant factor in U.S. policy. However early migration was overwhelmingly gendered male in the form of the "coolie" trade that landed at Angel Island in San Francisco to labor in industry and the railroads during the first half of the nineteenth century. Given overt racism at that time, the immigration of women was tightly controlled as a means of curtailing "permanent" settlement of Chinese migrants in the United States. While large waves of males migrated to the United States, few were able to obtain citizenship which was primarily reserved for White immigrants. As late as the 1850s – U.S. policy only acknowledged two "races" based on skin color – White and Black – leaving others as "aliens ineligible for citizenship."[30] Largely in response to the rapid increase in Chinese labor migration, U.S. President Chester Alan Arthur's administration ushered in the Exclusion Era, widely accepted as the years 1882-1943 (Lee 2003; Hsu 2000; Chan 1991). Begun with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), U.S. immigration policy during this period excluded all Chinese laborers and required extensive proof of class and status. Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, Chinese immigration to the United States was not significantly altered until

[30] This phrase was taken from the California Land Law of 1913 which prohibited Chinese (and others) ineligible for citizenship from buying land or leasing it for more than three years. This and other similar state laws were an extension of the 1790 Naturalization Act which allowed only "free white persons" to become U.S. citizens. Chinese were not included in the 1870 Naturalization Law which granted citizenship to Africans and those of African descent.

passage of the 1965 Immigration Act which in essence eliminated prior quotas and exclusion based on ethnicity and/or "race."

While broader U.S. attitudes about race and immigration have certainly changed from the days of the People v. Hall (1854) decision by the California Supreme Court in which a murder conviction of a White man was overturned because the conviction had been based on the testimony of a Chinese witness, nevertheless, significant restrictions remain and immigration policy remains highly charged. In 1997 I was teaching in China. At that time, I worked with two Chinese students who had spent a significant amount of money to apply to elite U.S. universities. They had invested enormous energy in their studies and had very successful undergraduate experiences in China. They were accepted to Ivy League schools and offered a good financial-aid package. They only needed to interview with the U.S. consulate in Shenyang. Despite their qualifications, they were turned down for a U.S. visa without explanation and forced to defer their graduate studies in the United States indefinitely. U.S. immigration offices, now under the Department of Homeland Security, are very clear about their priorities. Upon entering the offices in Beijing, one is greeted by photographs of large numbers of Chinese being taken off boats and arrested after attempting to enter the United States illegally. This is in sharp contrast to images that previously appeared on the U.S. government website for adoption regulations which featured a smiling Chinese baby with a caption stating, "Another satisfied client!"[31] The immigration officer that I spoke with explained that they are a law enforcement agency and see themselves as such with one – adoption. With

[31] This image of a smiling adoptee is no longer available online. As part of the post 9/11 move to reorganize the former Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), these regulations now fall under the Department of Homeland Security. Their imagery is arguably more egalitarian, however, the philosophy of facilitation of adoption (as opposed to other forms of immigration) remains intact.

regard to adoption, the agency is considered to be a facilitator – in all other capacities, including applications for spousal visas, they adopt a law enforcement agenda.

From both the position of U.S. immigration offices and the desires of Chinese students, workers, and fiancées, transnational movement is clearly seen as advantageous. Although adoptees are too young to express their desires or voice consent, their privileged immigration is ingrained in the process itself as they receive automatic citizenship upon landing in the United States. Feminist geographer, Doreen Massey's concept of power geometry is useful in this regard because it explains how the "identity of a place does not derive from some internalized history [but rather] from the specificity of its interactions with 'the outside'" (Massey 1994:169). Given that in China, transnational adoption is accepted as one important way for abandoned children to find parents and improve their material quality of life, then transnational adoption is quite literally a "powerful" opportunity. However, adopted children do not fit readily into the categories Massey uses to describe those who are able to take advantage of transnational movement. Massey argues that,

> "different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these [transnational] flows and interconnections. [... A]t the end of the spectra are… the jet-setters, the ones sending and receiving the faxes and the e-mail, holding the international conference calls, the ones distributing the films, controlling the news, organizing the investments and the international currency transactions. These are the groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases" (Massey, 1994: 149).

At the other end of the spectra are refugees, undocumented migrant workers, and others who are moving but are not in charge of the process. Adoptees hold an interesting place in this framework. Clearly they are not a part of the wealthy elite, however, through adoption, they are tied to people with more control over movement and greater possibilities of flexible

accumulation. This dramatic shift in their lives is institutionalized through the change in citizenship.

The long, complicated and overtly discriminatory history of Chinese-U.S. immigration and the experiences of other Chinese migrants such as the students (as mentioned above), and foreign brides (Constable 2003) is in sharp contrast to the immigration experienced by young adoptees – as many as ninety-eight percent of whom are female. But, these diverse immigration policies are related in that they continue to reflect the broader social ideals and transnational flows that are most beneficial to the imperatives of the white middle-class and elite in U.S. society.

4.3 CHINESE FEMININITIES

Throughout its long history, China has often experienced periods of tremendous and rapid social and political change. This is most recently true of the period following 1949 and the founding of the People's Republic of China. As Brownell and Wasserstrom state, at the level of everyday life, some of the most obvious and remarkable of these transformations have affected or occurred in, the realm of gender. [Consequently, one must question,] What are the links between broad political and economic trends and trends in notions about gender? How have elite and popular visions of the differences between the sexes tended to overlap or divulge? How have gender distinctions related to other kinds of distinctions, such as ones associated with ethnicity, class and generation (Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002: 1)?

These questions, considered within the context of transnationalism provide a framework for discussing the ways in which notions of gender (like notions of culture) may be altered. The

elasticity of these terms is indicative of the problems of representation and identity construction that are attendant to the time-space compression created as places move closer together within a new space of flows resulting from the instant and global access provided by the Internet, electronic media and transportation innovations (Harvey 1989; Thrift 1995:18).

I agree with Brownell and Wasserstrom that the pursuit of a universal definition of femininity is fruitless. Instead I favor an approach whereby "unique judgments about femininity [and thus masculinity] are made by specific people in particular contexts" (2002:2). In addition, our understanding of Chinese femininities cannot exist within a vacuum but rather must be considered in conjunction with but not overpowered by an examination of masculinities. These gendered constructions depend on an intimate and discursive relation between the lived experience of those involved with adoption (most adoptees are still very young but will increasingly contribute to this discourse) and representation in popular media, government policies and so forth. Consequently, my approach is based on a variety of data that includes participant observation, personal interviews with adoption industry workers, government agencies, and others, and life histories of adoptive parents, and an examination of both Chinese and U.S. media images, and adoption literature.

4.4 CHINA "DOLLS" AND "LOST DAUGHTERS": PACKAGING FEMININITY (U.S. IMAGES)

> Welcome to our little China dolls! ...comment on pictures sent from an adoptive father

> I am especially bothered when strangers call her a 'little China doll," as though she were a fragile piece of chinoiserie. How much are the compliments inspired by her personal

> qualities and how much by the obvious contrast between our Caucasian faces and her Asian one? (Howard 1999)
>
> No, we don't carry anything like that...nobody [Chinese] here would buy it- response from a Beijing salesclerk when asked if they carried baby dolls with Asian features.

The representation of girls' experiences contribute to and draw from often stereotyped notions of Asian femininity – playing on such images as China dolls, patriarchal victims[32] and "model" daughters and citizens. Because of the recent and rapid increase in the phenomenon of adoption of orphaned Chinese girls by U.S. parents, adoptive Chinese girls have been increasingly identified as a discrete community of Adoptive Chinese Girls, an identification encouraged by social workers and agencies, adoption policy and parents who, largely in response to the perceived failures of previous approaches, argue that the adoptee network may constitute a fourth and perhaps most valuable "culture." However, these adoptees face a reductionist identification as "Lost Daughters." Like Mohanty's description of the "average Third World woman," this is a powerful label that emphasizes the ways in which girls are perceived as victims within a neocolonialist context. In this case, the girls are simultaneously "lost" to their biological parents and to China (both of whom failed to value the girls) and in turn, "found" in the United States. Chapter 5 will address the ways in which their arrival in the United States is often interpreted as a kind of salvation narrative.

All adopting U.S. parents pass through Guangzhou (Canton) in order to process the immigration paperwork required by the U.S. government. This large, southern port city, only three hours by boat, or an hour by train, from Hong Kong has long been an international trading

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[32] Here I am referring to Western depictions of Asian women as powerless victims. These images of the postcolonial category of the "oppressed third world woman" were critiqued by Mohanty in her article entitled, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1984).

center. Transnational adoption has now become a key factor in Guangzhou's economy as nearly five thousand soon-to-be U.S. citizens pass through the city and their new adoptive parents eagerly prowl the tree-lined streets outside the United States consulate getting to know their new children, the vast majority of whom are daughters. At the time of my research in Guangzhou, the consulate was located in a non-descript, modern office building on Shamian island, a small island with a colonial history still reflected in the many remaining late nineteenth century buildings.[33] The length of the island can be walked in roughly ten minutes. It contains dozens of stores that cater almost exclusively to an adoption clientele. In her article, "Adopted children's identities at the China/U.S. border," Sara Dorow discusses the importance of Guangzhou. She argues, that although Guangzhou is similar to other national borders that are significant points in a particular migration, this point is unique because of the ways in which the short visit to Guangzhou provides the possibility of taking a "snapshot of the limits and possibilities of [ongoing] identity formation [which] focus on the crossroads where adoptive parents being to give meaning to the multiple social practices and categories that inform their children's identities" (Dorow 2004:84-5).

As I argued in Chapter 2, parents situate much of the adoption process within a context that parallels a physical pregnancy. This "pseudo-pregnancy," much like the pseudo-pregnancy identified in Ragone's discussion of surrogacy, gives parents a familiar social framework within which they can articulate their experiences and also reinforce the historical U.S. legal model of adopted children as "as if" they are biological children (Modell 1994). All of the parents that I

[33] In August of 2005, the consulate was moved to the Tian He district of Guangzhou. The move was attributed to post 9/11 security concerns. Although consular functions for adoptive parents remain unchanged, the new setting will certainly change the travel expectations of adoptive parents as much adoption discussion is centered around the comfortable and unique setting of Shamian Island.

interviewed and traveled with had a predetermined list of expected purchases for shopping in Guangzhou. While of course the lists of parents do vary, nevertheless, several items appeared again and again and all served as commodified (and very often gendered) sign-posts of the adoption process, the act of becoming parents and more specifically the act of becoming parents of adopted Chinese daughters. For example, while China souvenirs abound, many of the stores are filled with frilly dresses, hair bows, and pink and red silk *"qipao,"* traditional Chinese dresses. For many parents, purchasing the special issue "adoption" Barbie (available only at the White Swan hotel)[34] will constitute an important "memory" and introduction to western notions of femininity for their new daughters. Here, as in other contexts (e.g. Urla and Swedlund 1995), Barbie conveys multiple and sometimes, contradictory messages. In the spring of 2005 I found an adoption Barbie available on ebay. This prompts such questions as: If this Barbie is now available outside of Guangzhou and the immediate adoption process and its intimate link to a particular experience is lost, in what ways is it now incorporated into the broader Barbie experience? Are adoptive mother or adoptee simply other identities for Barbie, and the children who play with her, to try on?"

If the China doll imagery has gendered and inevitably "victimized" implications in the United States., the question remains, "What is the meaning of dolls in China?" In China, little girls are often addressed as, "*xiao wawa,"* or literally, "little doll." However, girls dressed in "*pusu,"* plain or ordinary clothes would not typically be addressed in this way. Instead, the term is related to "cuteness," "girlish" clothes and nicely styled hair and not the body itself. The term

[34] As Dorow (2004), and Volkman (2005) have already described at length, the White Swan hotel in Guangzhou is renowned for its adoption clientele and provides an important space within which transnational adoption can be considered.

"China" doll is never used and, although it is a highly gendered term, "*wawa*" carries none of the stigma of "victim" or "unwanted" that is associated with porcelain and "China dolls" in the United States. In contrast, in China it is a term of endearment that denotes affection and desirability. However, the U.S. symbols and terms have made their way into Chinese agencies and businesses that deal with adopting parents. One of the most widely known stores on Shamian Island, is called "China Doll." In addition to the store, they have a website and sell to parents world-wide. Clearly, the name "China Doll" has great implications for adoptive parents, many of whom are consciously seeking a China doll for their own family.

Foreign residents of China are well aware that it is virtually impossible (with the exception of areas that specifically cater to foreign adopters) to find dolls with Asian faces – though increasingly, Asian clothing (notably red Spring Festival outfits) are sold. In China, toy dolls are nearly by definition blond, and blue-eyed – an exoticized and fetishized version of western femininity. Here I refer specifically to toy dolls with which children would play and not dolls aimed at adult collectors.

Despite the wide use of stylized "China doll" imagery by many parents, the people they meet, and many businesses catering to adoptive families, the excessive attention and highly gendered imagery can be problematic as these adoptive girls get older and become aware of the ways in which they are seen to embody "oriental femininity." In relating her adoption story in a Hong Kong newspaper, Kelly Xiao Yu Humbert remarked, "I was born in China, and when my mom came to see me I was so cute she took me away" (Singh 2001:20). However, from the vantage point of embodied "oriental femininity" older girls may come to question, had they not been "so cute" would they have been "taken away" and what would have happened to them had they been passed over? Other common images of Asian women found in literature, art and travel

are “the exotic flower of the Orient,” and the infamously submissive and promiscuous prostitute, Suzie Wong. As Howard notes with regard to adopted Asian girls, many of these images are “seemingly positive stereotype that can have negative consequences [much like] the image of Latin women as flirtatious and hypersensual ‘Carmen’ types “ (Howard 1999). Furthermore, while many of the comments are on the surface complimentary, the excessive attention paid to their beauty and “adorability” can be embarrassing for children and can cause parents to wonder if their child is simply a “curiosity, an exotic objet d’art; in other words, a China doll (Howard 1999). Parents back in the United States frequently reject the image of a doll – preferring to emphasize the child’s improving “health,” evolving independence and strong spirit – characteristics they see as the result of American material wealth, nurture and lifestyle.

Of course, excessive comments about a little girl’s appearance are not just an issue facing parents who have adopted from China. However, the intersection of gender and perceptions of “race” carry a particular message in this context. Anagnost argues that transnational adoptions are highly privileged forms of immigration because the girls are perceived as victims, not just of the Communist birth-planning policies which are often blamed for their abandonment, but also victims of their cultural heritage – replete with its own fetishized symbols, such as bound feet, that signify simultaneously docile and exotic “oriental woman” (Anagnost 2000). Consequently, as discussed in the following chapter, U.S. middle-class parents are key participants in a salvation and redemption narrative. Anagnost further argues that in the United States, parenthood is frequently considered to be a middle-class entitlement and a requirement of sorts in achieving full citizenship. As she notes,

> I would argue that the position of parent, for white middle-class subjects, has become increasingly marked as a measure of value, self-worth, and citizenship in ways that beg an analysis of its specific formations in the context of late-twentieth-century capitalism, which, not incidentally, fuel the desire for adoption as a

> necessary 'completion' for becoming a fully realized subject in American life (2000:392).

However, as Constable points out, these privileges may also be intricately linked to the "heroic act" performed by adopting parents, perceptions in the United States that there is a domestic scarcity of available children and that Chinese girls, unlike their adult counterparts, have an indisputable innocence and promise of fulfilling U.S. expectations of "model" citizenship (2003).

Although increasing numbers of adopted children are boys, their current numbers remain relatively small and thus it is not really possible to address the ways in which notions of masculinity have been locally commodified.[35] However, both locals and adopting foreigners have noticed the increasing numbers of boys. The abandonment of boys however, is typically associated with such problems of "development" and "modernization" as unwed and/or migrant mothers, divorce and other break downs of "traditional" families. One older male shopkeeper on Shamian Island, who sells art work and calligraphy, discussed a fairly rapid change and assured me it was now very possible to adopt boys. While he accepted that the population of female children eligible for adoption would be greater than that of boys, he did not articulate a sense of "only" girls are available to foreigners and, like many other Chinese expected that part of the reason the sex ratio of children being adopted was so out of balance was due to the desires of foreigners. He did acknowledge that there were often very different reasons for girls and boys to have been abandoned, citing that boys were likely born out of wedlock and in Guangzhou, which

[35] I have not seen any statistics that break down Chinese adoptees by sex/gender. In speaking with various adoption agencies, I have heard estimates as high as five percent of Chinese adoptees are boys. This calculates to roughly 325 male adoptees in 2006.

is experiencing a large influx of migrant workers, the expectation was that most of the children were born to women who were originally from outside of the city. Most importantly, this man expressed relief at the change and felt that boys should have the same opportunities for adoption as girls. Ultimately, it will be interesting to see how and whether local businesses begin to cater to the increasing numbers of boys.

4.5 "LOST SONS"

> I have dim memories of my father. He took me to many places before he left me in Tianjin
>
> - Dandan, now 14, a boy who was abandoned at 6 years old.

The often stylized and commodified images of Chinese femininity are critical to our understanding of the gendered implications of the process of transnational adoption. But, in what ways do notions of Chinese masculinity and the situation of boys in China contribute to understanding of transnational adoption. As feminist scholars have argued, gendered perspectives are critical to our understanding of social phenomenon because they apply equally to all and challenge such simplistic dichotomies as victim/victimizer (hooks 2000). Consequently, hooks observes that "the assumption that boys always had more privilege and power than girls fueled feminists prioritizing a focus on girls" but this assumption proved problematic because of the corresponding assumption then that boys were recipients of social advantages across the board, thus ignoring the complications of class and race (hooks 2000:72). In the case of China, are only boys subject to the recent "Little Emperor" syndrome? The

corresponding argument would be that a boy born in rural Anhui or Tibet is automatically privileged over a girl born to a relatively wealthy Han couple in Shanghai or Beijing. While of course, existing studies do not support this argument, they fail to address the complications of China's contemporary demographics.

I first met Dandan in Shanghai in 2003, long after I had met his Dutch adoptive mother. Dandan was by then fourteen, small for his age but healthy – he had a great sense of humor and had just started high school. He had a serious interest in his studies and his English was improving rapidly. He was also learning some Dutch and was hoping to visit Holland soon to meet his new extended family. Although he was older than most children when they first arrive at a welfare institute, in many ways he typifies what I would argue constitutes a silent and increasing majority of abandoned children who are likely to remain in the care of the state indefinitely and/or are identified as "special needs" children. In his case, his chances of being adopted were considered very low because of his advanced age (he was twelve when he was formally adopted), not his medical condition. Dandan's situation was also unique because he was a healthy boy. The reasons for his abandonment did not fit with the U.S. stereotype of "lost daughter" adoptees.

Dandan's background is important not simply because it constitutes an exceptional case of abandoned children in China, but because his situation mirrors the changing social landscape of China. Officially, Chinese policies changed radically with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 and then again with the modernization policies enacted in the late 1970s. However, the fruition of many of these policies is only recently being fully realized. For example, although divorce has long been legal and available, it is only since the 1990s that the

divorce rate has begun to climb significantly.[36] Dandan believes that his father's remarriage and his stepmother's failure to accept him are the primary reasons he was abandoned. Other "modern problems" are also (re)appearing in China, such as out of wedlock births and prostitution, and may be linked to rising numbers of abandoned boys.[37]

In many ways, the circumstances facing the northern social welfare institutes in which I worked provide an important contrast to other regions of the country that are the primary source of children being placed with U.S. families. In the SWI's I visited, roughly ninety percent of the resident children are identified as "special needs." While the ten percent of "healthy" infants are overwhelmingly female, the "special needs" children reflect a "natural" ratio of boys to girls (roughly 50:50). It is precisely because these northern regions do not place large numbers of children for transnational adoption, and because the children they house do not fit within the context of studies of "lost daughters" and China's birth planning policies that I argue they are "silent" – their presence having been ignored in most earlier anthropological studies of Chinese children. Although the problems of abandoned girls have received a great amount of both domestic and international attention, broader social concerns[38] which contribute to infant abandonment have been largely overlooked, thus ignoring an increasingly large population, of healthy boys - arguably, China's "lost" sons.

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[36] According to China Daily, the most recent divorce statistics available for the P.R. of China is 21.2%. This is a 44.4% increase from the previous year of 2003. The article attributes the surge to newly simplified divorce procedures and more accepting social perceptions regarding divorce. Xinhua News. 2005-3-31.

[37] Statistics on abandoned children by gender are currently unavailable. However, there is anecdotal information available from SWI directors and NGO workers that the number of boys is increasing somewhat.

[38] I argue that the nature of economic changes needs to be reevaluated. Increasingly privatized markets have created increased competition for resources and eliminated the social service "safety net" that existed prior to the 1980s.

Although the popular and scholarly emphasis on "lost daughters" addresses important demographic concerns (e.g. the unusually high ratio of boys to girls), cultural concerns (e.g. the "traditional" preference for sons), and popular concerns of adoptive parents and others, it also illuminates the ways in which further studies on boys can more fully explain the contemporary nature of child abandonment in China. While my research has provided anecdotal evidence that healthy boys are being abandoned for reasons that differ from the abandonment of their sisters (e.g. economic changes that have privatized markets and eliminated the social safety net), no comprehensive demographic study has yet addressed the question of why boys are being abandoned in China. Moreover, my interviews with government officials and directors of some SWIs indicate that the population of abandoned children in China is no longer climbing and that there may be a significant drop in numbers of healthy abandoned children in some regions. Further work on population and birth planning is need to clarify these anecdotal observations.

4.6 SONS, DAUGHTERS AND THE CHANGING VALUE OF CHILDREN

A son is a son 'til he takes him a wife; a daughter's a daughter for all of her life
- Old English Proverb (www.artopp.net)

As soon as a daughter is old enough to be useful in the house or in the fields, she is also old enough to marry and leave the family (at no small expense to her parents) to give her labor and her sons to another family. The general attitude of the village is summed up in the words of an old lady who told me why she disposed of her daughters: 'Why should I want so many daughters? It is useless to raise your own daughters. I'd just have to give them away when they were grown, so when someone asked for them as infants I gave them away. Think of all the rice I save'
- Margery Wolf The House of Lim p.40

One goal of this dissertation is to reposition notions of gender within the context of the children abandoned in the social welfare institutes in which I worked. A critical step toward this goal entails an examination of the broader meanings of childhood, and how they fit within a contemporary Chinese context that places a high degree of emphasis on modernization and development (largely based on commodification). Like Dandan, many children available for adoption in China quite literally embody a "new" and "modern" China. Their status, as much as those of "Little Emperors" and "Little Empresses" is indicative of the ways in which China is changing and how those changes impact families and, specifically, children.

To date, relatively little scholarship addresses either the meanings of childhood or the conditions facing children in China. Of the existing literature on this subject, Patricia Zelizer's book, Pricing the Priceless Child, can shed some light on the gendered relationship between childhood, development and modernity. Although her work focuses primarily on the United States, many of the economic and social changes she describes seem relevant to contemporary China. Thus the ideas about changing childhood is also relevant to notions of (economically) "useless" children. Describing U.S. domestic adoptions, Zelizer's work illustrates that the adoption process familiar to contemporary Americans was only legally codified and sentimentalized in the 1920s and 1930s – considerably less than one-hundred years ago. The practice of "baby farming" was common until the 1870's, when a campaign was begun to end it. She further argues that this shift corresponded to a shift in class of adoptive parents. Previously, most adopting parents were skilled, semi-skilled or agricultural laborers whom Zelizer notes had a "use" for children as additional laborers. In the 1930's, adoptive parents were more likely to be engaged in business or office work and the mother almost certainly remained at home. Their lack of a need for "extra hands" allayed fears and enforced perceptions that adoption was based on

altruistic notions of love and family bonding. She states, "While in the 19th century a child's capacity for labor had determined its exchange value, the market price of a 20th century baby was set by smiles, dimples, and curls" (171). In addition, despite a preference for first-born males, Zelizer notes a distinct preference on the part of U.S. parents to adopt girls, perhaps because of perceptions of stronger emotional ties with girls, and their appeal as vulnerable, docile and adorable. Although Zelizer is looking at domestic adoption in the United States, the characteristics she discusses are consistent with neocolonialist stereotypes of Asian girls as well. Zelizer ties changes in parental perceptions of childhood to shifts in the economy and further argues that the "transformation in the economic role of a child was…just as complex and ambivalent in foster families as in natural ones" (Zelizer 1985:181). Although, the "new" form of adoption was considered altruistic, the child remained an object of ever increasing commodification so that Zelizer argues, "the sacred child was an expensive consumer item" (Zelizer 1985: 219). Ultimately, the "priceless" child came to replace the "useful" child and the increased sentimentilization of both adoption and children heralds increased commercialization as parents face risks that are now emotional rather than economic (Zelizer 1985).

And so, what does the Chinese case tell us about the changing gendered relationship between childhood and "modern" development? To date, one important focus of both PRC state policy and much Western scholarship has been the 1978 birth planning policies. Clearly, the Chinese government associates their notion of birth-planning and "quality" population with economic development (Anagnost 1995). But how does this filter down to changes in the lives of individual children – boys and girls? Jun Jing asks how food and children reflect social change in China. In the edited volume, Feeding China's Little Emperors, Jing, James Watson, Eriberto Lozado and others address particularly topical issues such as the future of family life, globalized

childhood and social change amidst such factors as the rural-urban divide that has resulted from post 1978 development. Dramatic regional differences in China make it very difficult to generalize about social conditions. However, Zelizer's notion of the changing value of childhood seems plausible within the context of wealthy (and thus largely urban) areas of China. Changing economic circumstances help to shift the family interest in children as economic producers, to an interest in children as economic consumers. Stores and restaurants that cater specifically to children are springing up rapidly in the large urban centers. Ten years ago, strollers were a rarity on the streets of Beijing, they are now ubiquitous. From a marketing standpoint, little girls are every bit as appealing as little boys, perhaps more so, as middle-class urban parents place greater emphasis on girls' appearance and cute clothing. In addition, there is considerable popular literature in China that examines both boys and girls as "Little Emperors" and the term "Little Empress" was coined by Chinese scholars and journalists in reference to single female children (Jing 2000).

In 2002, the welfare institute in which Dandan was raised began a new program aimed at placing children with Chinese foster parents. The program was initiated through the relationship between the SWI and a U.S. adoption agency and was specifically designed to help place children with manageable special needs. Part of the process included home visits from SWI staff and a local representative of the U.S. agency. I attended as a participant observer and was able to speak with prospective foster parents, most of whom were older and retired or semi-retired. While the details of this program will be discussed in Chapter 6, these prospective foster parents shed some light on how urban Chinese relate social change to gendered change in Chinese families.

Chinese foster families, like those in the United States are eligible for a stipend from either the state or other sponsoring agent. In 2002, I was working in Tianjin with a large SWI who was partnering with a U.S. adoption organization to implement a foster program that would alleviate some problems of overcrowding while also providing children with a family setting. In this case, families received Y800 per month, slightly less than U.S. $100. Parents who were unemployed or were for other reasons in serious need of additional income were not eligible. This helped to ensure that the child would not be particularly economically "useful" to the family and would thus be there for "altruistic" reason. Roughly one dozen homes were evaluated and all but one of the families was deemed eligible. The disqualified family was considered unacceptable because they had a coal stove which was identified as a safety hazard. We spoke extensively with parents about their expectations and desires with regard to the children. For the most part, gender was not a factor. When a gender preference was indicated it was related to the biological children they had raised and a desire to raise a child of the other gender. This was consistent with the views of so many parents with whom I spoke who acknowledged the ways in which some parents felt pressure (either economic or familial) to have a boy but felt a strong desire for both a boy and a girl. Two children, one boy and one girl was the commonly expressed ideal.

The neighbors and surrounding community were also considered to be important in placing children and neighbors were often able to provide some insight where fostering candidates were not. I asked one older man how he felt about having a foster family as a neighbor. He noted that a foster child was not a problem. Historically, adoption was stigmatized because adoptees were often sought as a means of bringing servants or young daughters-in-law into the family. Moreover, many adoptees were forced into prostitution (Wolf & Huang 1980).

The older man expressed a fondness for both girls and boys and noted that girls may be preferable because they are quieter and better behaved – in short better urban neighbors. However, the man blushed somewhat at the thought of a handicapped child and acknowledged that the presence of a child with obvious handicaps would be embarrassing. His embarrassment implied that the presence of an "imperfect" body would reflect on the entire community.

Throughout this chapter so far, I have identified populations of children who are abandoned in China but not reflected in the population of transnational adoptees that have received considerable popular and scholarly attention over the last decade. Specifically, "special needs" children and increasing numbers of healthy boys shed some light on the changing social landscape in which abandonment occurs. These children are put up for adoption for a variety of reasons. Gender, in particular, is an important consideration with regard to Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption because of the large numbers of girls being adopted, perceptions of both U.S. and Chinese parents' values and desires regarding daughters and sons, and the ways in which the immigration of adoptees, in conjunction with an historical perspective on Chinese-U.S. adoption, reflects key intersections of gender, race, and ideal citizens.

One other population of transnational adoptees also illuminates problematic intersections of gender and race: U.S. African-American adoptees to Canada and Western Europe. This relatively recent phenomenon is a reflection of U.S. domestic racial politics and points to: 1) ways in which U.S. African-American birth mothers perceive U.S. society to be overly racist and are choosing to place their children outside of the United States; 2) notions of citizenship and "ideal" children on the part of adopting parents; and 3) the legacy of a confrontational stances against U.S. domestic transracial adoption on the part of some African-American social workers which has contributed to the increase in transnational adoption.

4.7 CONTEMPORARY U.S. AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOPTEES

> The National Association of Black Social Workers has taken a vehement stand against the placement of black children in white homes for any reason. We affirm the inviolable position of black children in black families where they belong physically, psychologically and culturally in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future. Ethnicity is a way of life in these United States, and the world at large; a viable, sensitive, meaningful and legitimate societal construct. This is no less true nor legitimate for black people than for other ethnic groups. . . .
>
> - National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW).
> "Position on Transracial Adoption" 1972.

> Some agencies report that some birth mothers consider it an advantage to place their child abroad, because they perceive that there might be less prejudice and an easier life there.
>
> -Interview: Dawn Davenport discusses the adoption of African-American babies in foreign countries. Tavis Smiley on NPR November 4, 2004

Despite widespread perceptions that the flow of children in transnational adoption is only from "developing" poorer nations to "developed" wealthy nations, the United States "exports" increasing numbers of largely African-American infants to Canada and Western Europe. While the exact numbers of these kinds of adoptions are not known, the United States is the fourth largest "supplier" of adoptees to Canada (Davenport 2004). Clearly the language of the Dawn Davenport interview is problematic in that it discusses children in economic terms such as "supplier". However, the subject of the commodification of children will be addressed in Chapter 6. Here I would like to address concerns of "race." As the historical overview of immigration laws regarding Chinese makes clear, racial politics in the United States have a long dichotomous history that is constructed in "Black" and "White" terms, and this fails to take into account the racial "Other." Indeed, the term, "transracial adoption in the United States is a gloss for the "adoption of back children by whites" (Gailey 2000:13). A long history of slavery,

stereotyped images of black "mammies" and "welfare queens," and a refusal to acknowledge African-American culture in mainstream U.S. culture go far in explaining the vehement stand by black social workers in the 1970s. In addition, the NABSW expressed concerns that black parents looking to adopt black children could "not maneuver the obstacle course of the traditional adoption process. [That the] process has long been a screening out device. The emphasis on high income, educational achievement, residential status and other accoutrements of a white middle class life style eliminates black applicants by the score" (NAWSW 1972). Nevertheless, white couples did manage to adopt black children. However, the NABSW platform exacerbated the politics of transracial adoption at just the time that transnational adoptions (many of which are also transracial) were beginning.

In 1994, the NABSW softened their stand on transracial adoption to allow for it only "when 'clearly documented evidence of unsuccessful same race adoption' has been presented" (Gailey 2000:59). In addition, the 1994 Multiethnic Placement Act and the 1996 Inter-ethnic Adoption Amendment first curtailed and then eliminated race as a legitimate concern in placing children for adoption. The complex mix of racism and preference on the part of adopting white parents and concerns from the NABSW and others produced a complex set of identity and race politics that many prospective white parents "were not prepared to handle" (Gailey 2000:48). For these myriad reasons, many African-American children remained in long-term foster care and only relatively small numbers of white parents adopted African-American children.[39]

The situation of domestic transracial adoption was certainly one factor that contributed to adoptive parents increasingly turning to transnational adoption since the 1970s. Another

[39] According to the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, for example, in 1987, 8% of all domestic U.S. adoptions were transracial. See www.adoptioninstitute.org/whowe/newsletter.html.

important factor is the nature of Asian identity and racial politics. In stark contrast to stereotypical images of African-Americans, Asian children (especially girls) are positioned as a "model minority" that is "closer to white" (Gailey 2000, Clemetson 2006). Increasingly, transnational adoptive parents are implicated as participants in a stratified process of adoption that favors Asians and Hispanics over African-American children.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Because the population of adopted Chinese children has grown so dramatically over the last ten years, it constitutes a specific type of migration, one that is almost 98% female. Consequently, gender remains a significant factor in examining U.S.-Chinese adoptions. However, my research shows that because parents construct their understanding of the meaning of gender in China within a U.S. political and "racial" context, they are often unaware of the shifting meanings of gender in contemporary mainland China. They are unaware of the existence of abandoned boys and of the wider process of domestic adoption and fostering in China. Recent scholarly work has also typically examined the population of girls being adopted in the United States as an entity separate from the larger orphan population. In this chapter, I have attempted to reposition the meanings of gender within the context of the children abandoned in the social welfare institutes within which I worked, where many of the children are male and/or in need of medical attention. As I have argued, these children have been abandoned for a variety of reasons including, divorce, stigma attached to unwed mothers, minor medical concerns (such as six fingers on one hand), and significant medical problems (such as spina bifida and cerebral palsy).

As waves of little girls arriving in the United States have led to a popular U.S. conception that Chinese girls are not loved, so too have waves of U.S. parents arriving in China led many Chinese to ask, "Why do Americans only want daughters?" However, by more holistically examining the transnational process of adoption, these polarized images of "western" and "Chinese" girls and their families are challenged and common desires and concerns facing families exposed.

Although transnational adoption is implicated in a global system of stratified reproduction between "developed" countries and the "Third World," looking at populations of African-American children leaving the United States for homes in Canada and Western Europe, illustrates the ways in which domestic racial politics in the United States have effected both birth and adoptive parents' choices vis-à-vis adoption.

In conclusion, a closer examination of transnational processes, such as adoption, that complicate notions of childhood across borders, illustrate the ways in which intersecting notions of gender and race are a concern that is, like the red thread imagery, woven into the fabric of society.

5.0 SAVING CHILDREN BODY AND SOUL

> Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless (orphans) and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world.
>
> - James 1:27

> Philip Hayden's love for the people of China was demonstrated in a quote he kept in his dresser drawer, which said, "The greatest proof of Christianity for others is not how far a man can logically analyze his reasons for believing, but how far in practice he will stake his life on his belief.
>
> - (T.S. Elliot) http://www.philiphayden.org/aboutus.htm.

One oversight in previous studies of children abandoned in and adopted from China has been the failure to problematize meanings of salvation and abandonment and examine them within a culturally and historically grounded context. One danger of this approach is that it can read as an expose of sorts – casting suspicion on those involved. All of the agencies discussed here have formal mission statements in which they declare their mission is to improve the lives of Chinese orphans. In many tangible ways, this is exactly what they do. However, the notion of "saving" children is complicated and draws on many and varied histories, beliefs and goals of those involved. The greatest challenge in exploring ideas of salvation comes in identifying the many

perspectives on what is in the "best interests of the child"[40] and from what situations children need to be saved and in what capacity. In deconstructing this phrase and notions of salvation within the context of abandoned and adopted children from China, I look specifically at various groups working in mainland China.

Salvation, or rescue narratives, frequently pervade adoption literature and discussions. However, the ways in which adoption groups engage in the notion of "saving" Chinese children is particularly problematic, especially with regard to children who remain in China. These narratives are deeply imbedded in a history of paternalism and colonialism in which Westerners (especially missionaries) arrived in China to "save" Chinese from poverty and addiction to Opium even as some of their home governments were annexing Chinese ports and actively selling Opium to Chinese. Moreover, some foreign groups leveraged their influence to push for political intervention and control. The perception on the part of the Chinese that this was a blatant attempt to gain complete political control over China and the weak Qing Dynasty culminated in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 in which hundreds of Westerners and thousands of Chinese Christians lost their lives. The rebellion was ultimately quelled when a coalition of foreign troops entered and occupied Beijing. The U.S. military termed this the China Relief Expedition. From the Chinese perspective, this "relief" was a degrading and widely unequal series of concessions and reparations paid to foreign powers who enjoyed extensive privileges which remained largely intact until the onset of World War II. It is from this historical

[40] There is extensive scholarship available to illuminate the debate with regard to this concept. Most literature in the United States is concerned with custody battles in divorce. However, the term has global significance because of the language used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) which was adopted in 1989. No language specifically defines "the best interests of the child" (see http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30172.html for clarification) and the term remains highly contested.

perspective that contemporary salvation narratives associated with transnational adoption should be considered.

5.1 SALVATION NARRATIVES

A Chinese Orphanage, 1991-92. Saving China's Abandoned Girls
- Kay Johnson Wanting A Daughter, Needing a Son p.1.

Salvation narratives have long been a part of adoption. Children have been saved from poverty, neglect, death and abandonment, and adoptive parents have been saved from loneliness and infertility. Thoughtful approaches to the subjects of abandonment and adoption in China often are, like so many aspects of contemporary U.S. society, reduced to sound bites such as "saving girls" and "lost daughters." Being "lost" and being "saved" both have a plethora of complicated meanings associated with them – and need to be continuously problematized and reevaluated – like abandonment itself. Are these girls "lost", or "misplaced", or is there the capacity and interest in both China and the United States to see them as a new kind of immigrant, a bridge, and a "gift." As I have argued in Chapter 4 there are many reasons why their immigration is privileged. Among these reasons are their status as "victim", the stereotype of the Asian "model" citizen, and the sense of middle-class entitlement to parenthood (e.g. Anagnost 2000; Constable 2003; Hartmann 1995; Solinger 2001). I have also argued that their immigration is relatively easy, in part because representatives from both China and the United States see the process as a gift, not as a commodity. Ultimately, many involved with transnational adoption, see this exchange of adoptees as a bridge between the United States and China that is based on the emerging common community of adoptive Chinese daughters. However, while people and

representatives of both nations may envision this adoption process as creating a new community, the particular ways in which they imagine it may differ greatly. In this chapter, I examine the various organizations working to provide aid to Chinese orphans in and around Beijing and Henan Province. I am particularly interested in the ways in which they address their desire to "save" children living in Chinese social welfare institutes.

Salvation narratives can play a critical role in determining who acts on the behalf of children and why. One of the unique challenges facing young children is that they generally are unable to act as social agents on their own behalf. This is particularly true of the youngest of all – those still in utero. Consequently, in addition to abandonment and adoption – ideas about abortion also come into play given the continuity of anti-abortion and pro-adoption religious views in the United States. Ultimately, for many parents and relief workers, the notion of saving individual bodies/children is akin to "saving" China as a whole, a desire I argue can be criticized as fundamentally and intimately tied to neocolonialism and U.S. paternalism.

5.2 "ORPHAN" RELIEF NGOS IN CHINA – WHO ARE THEY?

> Our philosophy is to take in these so-called "broken" children and transform their hopelessness into beautiful stories of redemption and love. Philliphayden.org

> Beijing International Committee for Chinese Orphans (hereinafter BICCO) is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of Chinese orphans. BICCO is a group of multinational volunteers living in Beijing and working towards bettering the lives of Chinese orphans. BICCO volunteers provide direct care to these children by going to the orphanages to hold, feed, talk to and play with the children on a regular basis. – BICCO Charter & Mission Statement

Currently, there are scores of agencies and non-profit organizations that are working in China in bettering the lives of China's orphans – part of an emerging "third sector" in China's developing economy. Though some may not consider themselves as such, hereafter I will refer to all of these organizations as NGOs. The World Bank defines NGOs as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (Operational Directive 14.70). In wider usage, the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit non-governmental organization. NGOs are typically value-based organizations that depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalized over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics.

The term NGO is very broad and encompasses many different types of organizations. In the field of development, NGOs range from large, Northern-based charities such as CARE, Oxfam and World Vision to community-based self-help groups in the South. They also include research institutes, churches, professional associations and lobby groups. The World Bank tends to interact with two main categories of NGOs: 1) operational NGOs - whose primary purpose is the design and implementation of development-related projects, and; 2) advocacy NGOs - whose primary purpose is to defend or promote a specific cause and who seek to influence the policies and practices of the Bank.

> The World Bank classifies operational NGOs into three main groups: i) community-based organizations (CBOs) - which serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area; ii) national organizations - which operate in individual developing countries, and; iii) international organizations - which are typically headquartered in developed countries and carry out operations in more than one developing country. CBOs (also referred to as grassroots organizations or peoples' organizations) are distinct in nature and purpose from other NGOs. While national and international organizations are "intermediary" NGOs which are formed to serve others; CBOs are

> normally "membership" organizations made up of a group of individuals who have joined together to further their own interests (e.g.: women's groups, credit circles, youth clubs, cooperatives and farmer associations) http://docs.lib. duke.edu/igo/guides/ngo/.

Many of the organizations with which I have worked began as what the World Bank classifies as CBOs. Their community base is distinct from international groups such as UNICEF, but they function similarly at the local level.

Nearly all of these organizations are either based outside of China[41] or are international cooperations such as UNICEF. Increasingly, these organizations work together and even identify themselves as a type of relief "community." Nevertheless there are some important distinctions between them which highlight their boundaries and illustrates the ways in which their overall "missions" differ. I organize these relief agencies into three categories, based on the population that constitutes their primary membership: 1) adoption; 2) expatriate/overseas Chinese or *hua qiao* (花桥); 3) missionary. I consider adoption NGOs to be those whose membership is largely adoptive parents. They are specifically interested in the adoption experience and the ways in which adoptees will constitute a distinct community in the United States that may continue a relationship with China and Chinese culture and thus potentially help to bring improved services to other orphaned or abandoned children. While other chapters of this dissertation look at similar groups in the United States, notably Families with Children from China (FCC) , there are other groups that may or may not be *based* in the United States but work primarily in China. Two key examples are Half the Sky (HTS) and Our Chinese Daughters Foundation (OCDF). Half the Sky,

[41] While a complete discussion of the legalities of incorporating as a non-profit in China are not particularly relevant here, suffice to say, the legal obstacles and requirements are such that few (if any) of these organizations are legally incorporated in Mainland China. Some, however, are based in Hong Kong.

or in Chinese *ban bian tian (*半边天), is the name taken from Mao Zedong's slogan advancing the cause of women's liberation in China because women "hold up half the sky." According to their website, "Half the Sky was created by adoptive parents of orphaned Chinese children in order to enrich the lives and enhance the prospects for the children in China who still wait to be adopted, and for those who will spend their childhoods in orphanages. [they] establish early childhood education, personalized learning and infant nurture programs in state-run Chinese welfare institutions to provide the children stimulation, individual attention, and an active learning environment" (www.halfthesky.org). Our Chinese Daughters Foundation has offices in both Beijing and Bloomington, Illinois. While they provide somewhat "standard" adoption services (facilitation of paperwork, travel, etc.), they emphasize the on-going relationship between U.S. families and Chinese SWI's by organizing reunions and travel tours (for example Volunteer Family Tour, Shop 'til You Drop, Budget Panda Hugs, Live and Learn in China and others), and orphan care and support programs.

Expatriate/Overseas Chinese NGOs are comprised of people who are living and working in China –typically for extended amounts of time. These groups do not have a high profile in the United States and are often, local, grass-roots groups in urban centers (which attract a high number of foreign professionals) in China. Among these, I worked intimately with BICCO (Beijing International Committee for Chinese Orphans) and AEHF (American Education and Health Foundation). The following sections of this chapter address my experiences as a participant observer with these groups. This role involved playing with and feeding children, coordinating medical treatments, attending meetings, translating, and helping with fund-raising projects.

Lastly, are missionary groups whose work is very similar to the other two categories, but whose funding and membership comes almost exclusively from a variety of Christian sources. This group, by definition, treads a fine line because of the regulations in China against proselytizing. Nevertheless, both the missionaries and the Chinese government are interested in the community work carried out by these organizations. There are several well-established organizations that have worked successfully in China (notably CBN – Christian Broadcasting Network, and the Philip Hayden Organization) for a long-time and whose Christian roots are well-known to their Chinese hosts. For this group, the notion of saving children is especially powerful because of the dual meanings of salvation. These NGOs, heavily steeped in the "culture of life" are working to save both body and soul and provide alternatives in a country where abortion is a widely practiced form of birth control.

While this chapter examines the ways in which Christian coalitions and corporate networks contribute a wide variety of resources, I will also pay attention to one unique group of volunteers who are frequently key participants in volunteer networks: *"taitai's."* In Mandarin, *taitai* means "wife" and in many places wealthy Chinese may use the term derisively to refer to wives of wealthy businessmen who do not work and have limited responsibilities, in short "ladies who lunch." In discussing these projects with a friend, she acknowledged these groups as "the ladies who hold the babies." Despite the stereotyped gender imagery, these women are often most effective at attracting major corporate sponsorship (typically through their husbands), establishing strong cooperative arrangements with welfare institute directors and staff and managing projects in local-area institutes.

For many, the common denominator in uniting these disparate groups is the desire to "save" children. While the idea that abandoned children should have improved access to the

opportunities of family, medical care, and education is largely uncontested, ideas about the ways in which these opportunities should be administered and the specific meanings of "salvation" may vary considerably. Consequently, key questions arise: how have these children literally come to embody notions of salvation, what are they being saved from, and how does this "exchange" of children reflect exchanges of other ideals as well?

My first introduction to this type of work did not come until I was living in Beijing in 2002 with the intention of focusing the Chinese phase of my research specifically on social welfare institutes. I had proposed to study U.S. parents and Chinese children through a combination of U.S. adoption agencies and the bureaucracy embodied in the Chinese Center for Adoption Affairs (中国收养中心), CCAA.[42] While these agencies and the adoption process itself are still a significant part of this dissertation, I later learned how important non-profit aid organizations had become in the two or three years since I had first been to Beijing in 1999 doing preliminary research. I also did not fully appreciate the degree to which they would be relevant to my understanding of transnational adoption networks.

Upon arriving in Beijing in January of 2002, I spent my first week in a student dormitory meeting with old friends, procuring a resident visa, and looking for a place to live for one year of dissertation research. I was particularly concerned with choosing a good location because I wasn't yet firmly established with research contacts and a good location would facilitate making contacts. In addition, Beijing is a very large city and choosing an inconvenient location (such as most university housing) would result in a lot of time spent commuting. I was concerned that people might consider adoption either uninteresting, or too politically provocative. Shortly after

[42] CCAA is the department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs which is responsible for overseeing domestic and international adoption and the network of Social Welfare Institutes which house orphaned and abandoned children.

arriving in Beijing, a friend from Japan emailed me to say that a Canadian friend of hers was looking for someone to take over her apartment. This was a good arrangement and not long after moving in, she invited me to join her and some Canadian friends for coffee at a bar in Houhai. In many ways, that coffee bar and Houhai itself have become a metaphor for the changes taking place in Beijing. Houhai is a neighborhood just northwest of the geographical, historical and cultural center of the city. It is connected to such landmarks as the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square through a series of small lakes – Houhai being among the farthest from the center. At that time, the neighborhood remained relatively unchanged by the developers' wrecking balls. Chinese and foreigners both flocked there in search of history and a peaceful stroll around a beautiful lake. Prince Gong's Palace is there, as is Madame Sun Yat-sen's old home. Tourists came to experience a large "traditional" Chinese neighborhood – a confusing maze of small alleys, called *hutongs*, and courtyard houses – some of which were being stylishly modernized by both foreigners and Chinese of means. The local economy was beginning to boom from several low-key coffee bars and restaurants, and companies that employed cadres of men peddling Pedi cabs and *hutong* tours. After my first visit to Houhai, it quickly became evident that much of my initial understanding of China needed to be rethought to incorporate the unbelievably rapid pace of change and development.

The coffee bars in Houhai were an interesting place to meet because of their low-key, rather eclectic appearance and the mix of people who went there, despite relatively high prices. On that particular occasion, I was the only American amidst a group of Canadians who were already acquainted. I was asked about my work and reasons for coming to China and I was happy to share both my goals and concerns. I immediately had the attention of one couple, Barri and Chris who had slightly stunned looks on their faces. Barri explained that they were fostering

a little girl from Tianjin, then about two years old, who had some medical problems and was in need of cardiac care. Despite being busy professionals in their fifties with grown biological children, they were considering a permanent adoption. At the time, I thought it an amazing coincidence – again, underestimating the ways in which adoption and orphan relief had come to the fore in the expatriate community. For Barri and Chris, the decision needed to be made fairly quickly because they faced a new kind of biological clock. In China, older adoptive parents are preferred – only recently was the minimum age for adoptive parents lowered from 35 to 30. However, there is a concern that parents might be "too old" to adequately care for young children. Consequently, the maximum age at which single people can adopt is 55, and for couples, a combined age of 110. This leaves couples some discretionary "wiggle" room in that one parent may be in their 60s as long as the other parent is in their 40s. Because Barri and Chris were both in their early 50s, the combined age of 110 was looming. In addition, turning a foster situation into a permanent adoption, while technically not allowed, is possible in some situations but would require extra time and effort. In the course of our conversation, Barri and Chris explained how they first met their daughter and became involved in fostering. They had friends in the expatriate business community who were very involved and were working on-sight at an SWI in Tianjin that primarily cared for "special needs" children. Here it should be noted that the term, special needs, is a complicated one which can have significant political and social implications for children, especially those eligible for adoption. While I will not discuss these implications in detail here, it is essential to understand that the designation of the term directly affects children and families both in the United States and in China (though the meaning varies from the United States. to China). Barri assured me that if I was interested in this work, I needed to contact her friend, Merida who had organized a small foster home of her own and worked

intimately in Tianjin, caring for children with special medical challenges. Barri passed along Merida's email contact information and, as happened so often, the Internet proved to be both a convenient and versatile way to make contacts, follow-up notes and conversations and reach wider and wider circles.

I first met Merida at her home in an eastern district of Beijing that is home to many foreigners. She and her husband, both in their 50s lived in a two bedroom high-rise apartment with their four year old adopted son Mengmeng who suffers from a rare skin disease in which a serious lack of collagen causes the skin to continuously blister and peel. In addition, he was missing several toes and was born with a club foot. While his foot problems were relatively manageable and somewhat correctable through surgery, the skin condition is incurable and serious due to the continuous discomfort and risk of infection. Mengmeng's situation is fairly unique in that he was fostered by Merida and her husband who were able to obtain a medical visa to travel to California for him to be examined by U.S. experts. This trip proved fortuitous because it was the seed for on-going relationships between these doctors, Mengmeng's family, multinational corporate sponsors, and eventually many other children and volunteer organizations working in both the United States and China. These relationships illustrate the often circuitous nature, the red thread ties that bind, of transnational endeavors by linking interactive global networks of people, resources, and ideas.

At the time that we met in 2002, Merida's organization, BICCO, was just getting off the ground. They had recently split from a parent group in Tianjin and, although they were still working in Tianjin, they were looking for projects in the Beijing area that could better utilize the resources of that city's wealthy expatriate community. Merida, already in her mid-fifties, and soon to be a grandmother, was also a physician's assistant who wanted to use her medical

background but did not have a work visa. Most women (or spouses) who accompany a working spouse are issued residence permits. Merida was especially effective because, having been born in Shanghai (though largely raised in Hong Kong and Brazil) she felt a very tangible kinship with China, had family connections and spoke both Mandarin and Cantonese. In addition, she often cited her experiences as a college student in the 1960s as a basis for her social involvement and activism. Of course, she also had a heart for children, especially those in need and without strong advocates on their behalf. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing young children living in SWIs is that they have caretakers but no one to really advocate on their behalf. While social workers are often underpaid, overworked and criticized in the United States, social work has not yet developed in China and thus only the director of the SWI is able to act as an advocate.

Merida, certainly one of the most vibrant, caring and creative people I have met, had already made a substantial personal commitment to developing a project to help improve the lives of China's orphans in the Beijing area. Upon returning to China a few years earlier, Merida had found out about a group of expatriates living in Tianjin – not quite two hours train ride from Beijing – who had set-up a small group to regularly volunteer at the Tianjin City Children's Social Welfare Institute (天津市儿童福利院). Tianjin is China's fourth largest city with a population over ten million. Consequently, the SWI is also fairly large. At that time it housed roughly three hundred children with another eighty to one-hundred in local foster care. The vast majority of children had special medical needs and consequently, Merida's services were very useful. As medical coordinator she was able to identify children with specific problems the group could address, she was able to track the children and also able to arrange, assist and translate for a U.S. doctor, based at a Western clinic in Beijing, who paid regular visits to the children. One of my first visits was with both the U.S. doctor and Merida. This visit was eye-opening for me, since I

had no prior medical experience. I had some experience with children and understood their basic needs in an institutional setting and the challenges of providing them with good nutrition and opportunities for play and snuggling. But, I was completely unaware of some of the problems facing these children because many of the conditions they suffer from are rendered invisible by the prompt attention they typically receive in the United States or often within a family in China.

One of the first children I met was a young girl with hydrocephalus – a condition often associated with other congenital problems – where the spinal fluid is produced faster than it can be absorbed and is retained inside the brain, causing the brain to swell dramatically. The pressure inside the head will cause seizures but the swelling can be reduced with shunts to drain the fluid. Shunts however, must be replaced as the child grows and they need constant attention. This child made me see the ways in which a seemingly "simple" procedure in the United States can be beyond the financial reach of welfare institutes in China. SWIS typically receive a stipend per child that is typically $12-$15 per child per month.[43] Given China's new economy, SWIs are facing steep medical costs because they must pay for services at hospitals.

Between 2000 and 2001, in her capacity as medical coordinator in Tianjin, Merida had grown very involved in the activities of the International Committee for Chinese Orphans (ICCO), the local NGO that was regularly volunteering in Tianjin. Through connections in the business community, and a good relationship with the SWI director, the formidable Madame Pang, Merida was able to open a small medical foster home in a sixth floor apartment in a housing complex about ten minutes (forty in heavy Tianjin traffic) drive from the welfare institute.

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[43] In speaking with directors of SWIs, CCAA officials and a wide variety of adoption workers, I was consistently quoted per child/per month stipends of Y100-Y125 which is slightly over US$12.

The business community in China is a very interesting mix of people who illustrate Ong's notion of a deterritorialized community that uses citizenship as a type of resource. For example, the man who donated the apartment to Merida, like Merida herself, was born in China but holds U.S. citizenship and is thus able to take advantage of changing political and business opportunities in both places. For those born in Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau, holding a U.S. passport is perceived to be particularly important because in China they are considered to be PRC citizens and should there be a national emergency (e.g. Tiananmen Square), they might have problems leaving the country without a U.S. passport. Should it be to their advantage however, they can still claim Chinese citizenship and avail themselves of the advantages of Chinese citizenship (for example, starting businesses, adopting, etc.). In these and many other ways, the adoption community, drawing heavily on the business community, depends upon a kind of transnational subject in which "flexibility, migration, and relocations… have become practices to strive for rather than stability" (Ong 1990:19).

Merida's foster home provided an important source of supplemental medical care for children who needed relatively short-term but intensive medical care that the busy staff could not easily provide. For example, children who had cleft lips and/or palates but had not had surgery and were thus difficult to feed; failure to thrive children who needed additional holding or feeding on demand; or children who needed special rehabilitation following a surgery. The foster home typically held about six to eight infants and/or toddlers and was well equipped with cribs, toys, playmats, bouncers and the like. It was decorated much like a nursery that one would see at a home in the suburbs in the United States. One of the first children to enter the foster home was Mengmeng, the boy eventually adopted by Merida and her husband. Merida spent the entire first year of operation, in Tianjin, commuting home only on weekends. It was a huge

personal investment, as were the on-going trips to Tianjin following her move back to Beijing. Although a practicing Catholic with a particular affection for a nearby Catholic run orphanage, Merida herself was not directly involved with missionary work, nor did she seem particularly moved by their spiritual mission. Rather, her focus remained squarely on the physical health and well-being of the children and the ways in which she could medically "save" children with specific health conditions. She practiced a kind of triage not uncommon in areas where medical resources are scarce. For example, she would not take on the child with advanced hydrocephalus who had countless seizures because the child had likely experienced severe brain damage already as a result of the seizures and would not recover. Merida had been able to gain the trust of SWI staff and she worked intimately with them to provide care whenever possible.

Shortly before I met her, Merida moved back to Beijing and had established a Beijing based group of volunteers that was becoming independent of the founding Tianjin group. She still served as medical coordinator for that group and appreciated the resources they were able to bring to the children. Nevertheless, she was frustrated by what she perceived to be as an overly cautious approach, especially with regard to funding, and longed to pursue a more aggressive course of action. Her medical foster home ran fairly smoothly. She had a trained staff and thus decided to shift her personal base back to Beijing, though she continued to make regular weekly visits to Tianjin to check on the children at both the foster home and SWI, to maintain her strong relationship with Director Pang.

Merida was able to marshal a considerable and very diverse group of people who, in one way or another, were committed to "bettering the lives of Chinese orphans." In addition to the business community discussed earlier, she regularly worked with other NGOs, women from many of the embassies, a network of Chinese doctors and Christian groups. Their sense of what

this statement means and how they considered their roles in saving children became evident over the course of the next two years as I worked intimately as participant observer and, ultimately, as group secretary - responsible for recording meeting minutes, writing letters, monitoring emails and newsletters and so forth. The group eventually defined their scope in terms of three critical interconnected areas: medical, nutritional, developmental. Their projects included volunteering and eventually remodeling a small state-run SWI about one hour from Beijing, arranging annual visits for Stanford pediatric orthopedic surgeons, maintaining the medical foster home in Tianjin and later in Beijing, seeking out new, needy and overlooked SWI's in the area, arranging for medical care and procedures for kids with special medical needs, and more. On an individual basis, members often saw their contributions differently. Some were committed to taking children to a hospital and paying their medical expenses, while others were interested in holding a charity ball as a fund-raiser. Monthly meetings were always interesting and lively and a source of constant negotiations between members. Typically, the management committee (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and any parties with specific issues) met a few days before the general membership to review specific cases and issues at hand and prepare a presentation and review for the general meeting.

While Merida was always very open, interested, and supportive of the committee's decisions, nevertheless she remained the driving force and visionary behind the fundamental issues at hand. She was rarely denied any requests for funds. One notable example, was when a special needs child had come to her attention and she felt interested and able to help the child. The difference in this case was that the child was still in the custody of the biological parents. The child was a teenager and in need of surgery and rehabilitation. Merida knew them through connections and accepted that their family was genuinely in need of financial assistance. In

many ways, this was a watershed moment for the group. They needed to reconsider their "mission" and the statement they wanted to make with regard to helping children. Two main opinions emerged. One faction felt that some resources should be provided to help this child. The other faction thought that the group's mission only covered abandoned children in residence in an SWI, and that this case would put the group on a slippery slope and ultimately widen the scope and objectives of the group. The child was in a precarious situation. As biological parents who have abandoned special needs children might argue, especially in the face of a nearly nonexistent social support system, the best way to "save" their children might be to abandon them. Ultimately, the group agreed that they could not provide funding or support for the boy's medical care and his parent's were left to continue their search for funding. This boy's needs highlights many of the problems facing children with special medical needs in contemporary China: they are rarely eligible for the very limited and specialized aid available to children in SWIs. They are often stigmatized in their communities. The medical community in China does not provide charitable aid on a systemized basis and in fact, doctors are often accused of price gouging. The government support system, limited as it was, is eroding in the face of a market oriented economy, there is no civil society to pick-up the slack. As Laura Cecere notes in her book, The Children Can't Wait, adoption services have also created what amounts to a two-tiered population within SWIs because children considered to be likely candidates for adoption often receive better access to resources than those who are ineligible.

5.3 FANGJIAN

Shortly after meeting Merida and her group I was able to visit an SWI that they were considering taking on as a pilot project. Through CBN, Merida had established rapport with the director who, though a difficult personality, was willing to work with the group. My initial visit was very telling of the vast differences facing children in China. Unlike the well connected, well funded and large SWI in Tianjin, this SWI was unusually small and had been completely overlooked by both the expatriate and local Chinese communities. As is often the case, it was located alongside a senior citizens home. Because the SWI was small, and located in a recessed courtyard, few Chinese visited. Approximately twenty children were in residence, ranging in age from infants to eighteen years old. Nearly all of the children were considered "special needs" but some had relatively minor problems, such as a club foot, whereas others faced more comprehensive physical challenges, such as cerebral palsy and spina-bifida. The SWI was very dreary with no yard or grass for outside play and only a large courtyard in front of the rooms that housed the children who were grouped roughly by age. I first visited in the winter and it was difficult to interact with the children because of the building's architecture, which was not unlike a U.S. motel – an "L" shaped building with one row of seven rooms and the other with three. Each room had a separate door to the outside. The first two rooms were used as offices, one for the director and the other for two women in charge of accounting. One large room was used as a playroom but it was cumbersome to bring the children from all of the other rooms in harsh weather. Only one of the children, Dameng, was able to attend public school. At that time, Dameng was nine years old and had been in residence since she was six. I was never able to uncover her entire family history, but knew that she was there because her father was in prison.

Such a situation was not unheard of and, in fact, outside of Beijing, an entire SWI existed to house children who had no caretakers because one or both parents were in prison.

Although Fangjian had relatively few children in residence, it was initially the primary focus of BICCO's time and energy. The building needed a lot of work, staff needed to be hired and trained, all of the children needed development and medical evaluations, education opportunities secured, nutrition needed to be improved and structured play needed to be organized. Funds were needed to accomplish all of the above. While the implications of fund-raising vis-à-vis the commodification of children will be discussed in Chapter 6, here I would like to emphasize the ways in which relief NGOs must spend a significant amount of time engaged in fund raising and meetings in order to fulfill their mission.

While some BICCO members had already adopted or were interested in possibly adopting, this was not on the list of primary objectives. In the case of Fangjian, the children were seen as largely unadoptable for two main reasons: 1) most children were not "healthy" or were too old to be eligible;[44] and 2) the director did not have a relationship with CCAA and was not likely to develop one or to begin processing paperwork for resident children. Consequently, BICCO remained focused on the health and well-being of the children.

Over the course of the next six months, volunteers arrived regularly (at least once a week) and brought supplies such as diapers and extra toys and treats for the children. Volunteers stayed for two hours at a time and played and held the children while Merida discussed specific cases and goals with the director. Eventually, funds were raised and a contractor was hired (after

[44] While children over four are widely considered to have missed their "window of opportunity" for adoption, some of the children were actually over the age of eighteen and thus were ineligible for adoption from the standpoint of U.S. Immigration and Naturalization procedures). Following September 11, 2001, this department was rolled into the newly created Department of Homeland Security. However, this had relatively little impact on the adoption services offered.

considerable negotiations) and Merida was able to organize the renovation of the building itself. While the actual building alterations may seem relatively minor by Western standards, the impact on the daily of lives of the children was immense. A common dining area replaced a storage room, children's rooms had built-in bookshelves and space for each child's belongings, and the kitchen and the bathroom were both vastly improved with the addition of hot water, toilets, a tub for bathing infants and a washing machine. The washing machine had been particularly contested because the director did not want to pay the increased water and heat expenses. Eventually, Merida prevailed. In addition, the children were now able to move easily between rooms because a common enclosed hallway had been added to the front of the building. This change, combined with the common dining room greatly altered each child's experience. They were able to interact with each other easily and without the aid of care-takers. The one contested area that remained, like other SWI's in which BICCO was to work, was the storage room. Fangjian, as much as it was a bit off the beaten path, had received donations of used clothes and toys – none of which were being used. They had one large room in which all of these things were stored. This was not a simple case of "corruption" – they hadn't taken the goods for personal use and yet the clothes were unworn and the toys had never been played with. The staff felt, rightly of course, that they would be damaged if the children had access to them and so they were saved for some vague unknown need in the future. Here, it was the ownership rather than the use of commodities that was valued. This was true of several different SWIs that had received some donations and simply put them in a storage room where they remained protected and unused. Some volunteers questioned whether they were things that would be brought out on

special occasions or for important visitors, but the disordered rooms suggested that this was not the case.

5.4 AEHF – AMERICAN EDUCATION AND HEALTH FOUNDATION

Not long after I had begun working with Merida and BICCO, I attended a service sponsored by the small, but growing, Jewish community of Beijing. Once again, personal interests and commitments were to prove invaluable to my research. In talking with Deborah, a woman I had met a year or two earlier, I briefly explained the research interests and work that had brought me back to Beijing. Once again, her startled interest indicated the ways in which awareness of transnational adoption and related networks had grown in just two years.

Deborah, like Merida, had invested herself in China. Unlike Merida, she had come twenty years earlier in the hopes of building a business of selling medical products to a modernizing China. Shortly after her arrival in Beijing, she met Tom, the cousin of her business partner. They later married and had three boys, all of whom were living in China and spoke fluent Chinese. She and Tom were committed to long-term residence in Beijing and lived in a Chinese neighborhood and enjoyed the rapid growth of the city and their business. Despite, this, Deborah was uncertain about giving birth in a Chinese hospital. She was concerned that health care was neither what she valued culturally or medically (for example, Chinese hospitals have a very high rate of Caesarean sections). Consequently, like other expatriates who were unable or unwilling to return to the United States, she decided to go to Hong Kong for all three of her deliveries. This highlighted a large gap in available medical care and life in Beijing. Ultimately,

these concerns inspired her to establish a hospital where U.S. parents would feel comfortable giving birth. She and her company modified an existing preschool in a once suburb of Beijing that was quickly becoming incorporated into the city. They founded a small, family oriented hospital that would privilege pediatric and obstetrical care and work intimately with other area hospitals. Twenty years after arriving in Beijing, she had, by any standard, been enormously successful and had succeeded in building the first private, Western style hospital in China. In 2002, the company she had formed was looking at plans to open a second hospital in Shanghai. The success of the hospital, their good relationship with their Chinese partner hospital,[45] and the experience of one U.S. member of their staff who had adopted from Henan province led them to create a non-profit foundation, the American Education and Health Foundation (AEHF) that would provide medical services to the Henan SWI. Long-term they looked forward to gradually expanding the program to make services available to other area SWIs. While they were not eligible for tax incentives under Chinese law,[46] they were hopeful that there would be, as there are in the United States, additional social and business benefits to this type of work. According to their brochure,

> Deteriorating or poor health conditions create political risks in countries of strategic importance to the United States. Improving the health of people in other countries makes humanitarian, strategic and moral sense. Support of international health initiatives

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[45] Joint venture system requires a Chinese partner in order for the hospital to be considered private.

[46] China's NGOs (also known as NPOs – Not for Profit Organizations) typically fall under three categories: Social Organizations (SOs) (shehui tuanti), Foundations (jijinhui), and Civil Non-enterprise Institutions (CNIs) (minban fei qiye danwei). The three types of NPO are not government agencies, though they are all closely linked to the government through the applicable establishment and oversight mechanisms. Consequently, private NGOs/NPOs are rarely granted tax exemption. For details on specific tax and legal codes a good source is the Council on Foundations website. COF is a membership organization of over 2000 grant making foundation and giving programs – largely sponsored through corporate sources. Their project, United States International Grantmaking (USIG) provides a thorough base of NPO regulations by country. (http://www.usig.org/countryinfo/china.asp#Summary).

> enhances security, prosperity and democracy and provides an opportunity for leadership that flows from America's strength in the biomedical field. AEHF was established as a public-private partnership dedicated to bringing improved health care to underserved areas and populations of China.

Here it becomes clear they also envisioned a link between social services provided by U.S. firms in China and the overall well-being of the United States itself.

I first visited the Henan SWI in March of 2002 when I accompanied an AEHF team, consisting of one doctor and one nurse, on their second visit. It was hard to get to because flights from Beijing arrived at the provincial capital of Zhengzhou, a three hour car trip away. Our flight arrived late so that we were obliged to stay in Zhengzhou for the evening. Trains were slow and arrived in the middle of the night. These factors, combined with the volunteer nurse and doctor's schedules, meant that there was relatively little time for us to spend with the children. Consequently, what time we did have was incredibly busy. These problems reflected long-term challenges to the hospital and AEHF staff who considered their special "mission" to be reaching out to underserved children.

As soon as we arrived in Zhengzhou, the SWI director, Director Hou, met us with a car. He was in his mid-fifties; a former fighter pilot who had retired from the Chinese air force. In keeping with the Chinese system he had been awarded the job as director which was generally regarded as a political appointment and reward for governmental service. From a western perspective, a career in the air force seems to be inappropriate preparation for director of a social welfare institute. However, the field of social work is only now beginning to emerge in China. Even if the position had been considered a "social work" position, there is not yet a fully developed field of candidates who could meet these requirements. Consequently, a director such as Director Hou, may be considered a good advocate for the children because he worked within a

system in which good political ties, *guanxi*, and social capital had a tangible value with regard to fund-raising, introductions to aid groups, etc.

The Henan SWI was unlike any I had visited before because of the way in which it was integrated into the village. It was not a stand-alone institutional building but rather a large but conventional one-story rural style building that housed children at one end and seniors at the other. Director Hou informed us that a site had been selected for building a new institution that would house both seniors and children. It would have expanded medical facilities to support their special needs. The new building was an indicator of Director Hou's successful negotiations for additional funding and opportunities for the children.

For the time being, we saw children in the single room office of the on-staff doctor. The SWI staff had selected roughly thirty children for us to see. The children ranged in age from infancy to twelve years old. We met briefly with a twelve year old boy, Fu Xiaomeng, upon our arrival. He had a dramatically swollen and droopy jaw which I was to later learn had been caused by the growth of a large but benign tumor. The doctor, a woman from Canada, and the nurse, from Beijing but trained in Singapore, were busy examining patients while I attempted to take notes on the children's condition, to take pictures for subsequent examination and to serve as translator wherever possible on behalf of AEHF. The children had a wide variety of problems including, blindness, Downs Syndrome, malnutrition and dehydration (failure to thrive), and heart defects. One girl who was doing very well had recently had surgery to correct a congenital heart defect. Fu Xiaomeng and his "younger brother" Fu Dameng who was about eleven and suffered from Treacher Collins Syndrome (no facial bones) were especially prominent because they were older than the other children and, unlike the infants, were able to engage with us. Fu

Dameng could not speak but had local friends and a way with people. Fu Xiaomeng was very earnest in asking for help and making his needs known.

The SWI staff were particularly interested in these boys given their ages and limited prospects. Their attitude was consistent with broader Chinese views of childhood that are rooted in both Buddhist philosophy and Chinese traditional medicine that see infants as both physically and spiritually tenuous.[47] Within this framework, as children get older they garner more support and respect. Although I was never able to ascertain his personal history, I suspect that Fu Xiaomeng was abandoned later in childhood since his tumors did not appear until after infancy. It was nearly 7:00PM when we were finished seeing the children and returned to our hotel for dinner. That evening we discussed cases and possibilities for treatment. Fu Xiaomeng and some others were identified as viable candidates for treatment in Beijing.

The next morning we returned for a brief follow-up visit to the SWI. We were able to look around freely although we were asked not to take pictures without express permission. We met some of the other children and seniors and also talked to children from the local middle-school who came by regularly to help clean-up the grounds and visit with the residents.

One of the rooms we visited was representative of some of the problems that first caught the attention of Western visitors and led to sensationalized accounts of abuse and neglect. The room was dark during the day and had old bedding and cramped empty cribs. The children in that room were in small chairs. They were all infants and were tied with cloth to support them in the chair. There was a small transistor radio to keep them company. This is a very unhappy sight, regardless of your cultural perspective. However, it is important to note, that they were attended

[47] Furth's work gives an historical perspective on Chinese medicinal views that hold that, "medicine supported the ritual understanding of early childhood as a time of spiritual vulnerability complemented by physical weakness [and] Although 'life' begins at conception… 'maturation' extends past birth to the second year of life" (Furth 1995:176).

to as much as was possible given the level of staffing and that they were tied to chairs in lieu of expensive baby harnesses that would be readily found in the United States or in wealthier areas of China. The children exhibited a classic rocking motion in response to their lack of stimuli but seemed otherwise healthy.

In one room, we noticed a child with severe facial scarring. We had not seen this child the day before. The scarring appeared to be the result of burns but without further examination it was not possible to know for certain. The doctor was particularly interested in plastic surgery cases because those procedures are available at the hospital. Thus this child, a little girl the doctor estimated at around eighteen months, was a good candidate for a trip to Beijing. This was my first meeting with that little girl, named Fu Meili. I learned much from Meili and her experiences. On this particular occasion, I came to realize, how much adoption and adoption tracking, despite the obvious advantages, had negatively impacted some of the most needy children. The SWI staff had a distinct rationale that led them to select only some children to be seen by AEHF. They were careful not to select too many children since this would have drawn too heavily on *guanxi* and perhaps, in their eyes, would have discouraged doctors from coming for future visits. The adoption medical staff and director did not see Meili as a viable candidate for adoption – she could not be "saved" from an institutional setting, she was not in immediate distress, nor was she old enough for the staff to be likely to advocate for her. Thus, the SWI staff considered her a low priority for medical care. Fortunately, the AEHF group stumbled upon her and was able to begin a tentative and problematic dialogue with SWI staff concerning which children could be "saved" or at least helped. Often the AEHF assessment of resources and possibilities for children contrasted sharply with the Chinese SWI staff's expectations.

Ultimately, both Xiaomeng and Meili came to Beijing for treatment but, for a variety of reasons, their paths then diverged considerably. While both received treatment, neither of their wounds were radically altered. However, Meili was fostered by a wealthy Canadian couple who eventually adopted her. She is now living in Toronto and undergoing a series of procedures to repair her facial injuries. Xiaomeng, already twelve, was not as fortunate. He was deeply disappointed and disillusioned by what he perceived to be the failure of Western medical treatment. His swelling remained pronounced and officials at the SWI reported that he had run away from their care shortly after returning from Beijing.

5.5 BY ANY OTHER NAME

> The problem of naming marks a site of anxiety about anchoring the child's identity, its ties to its place of origin, and its difference (Anagnost 2000:408).

So far, this chapter has addressed some of the different aspects of NGO work and has looked at what actually happens to children in order to highlight some common themes. Next I discuss ways in which various groups approach naming children.

One of the first things that surprised me upon visiting the Tianjin SWI was how difficult it was to track children and the progress they were making. NGOs tended to do so only with children with whom the group had long-term relationships. My initial expectation was that I would get to know a number of children and follow their progress. Ultimately, my ability to do this was limited. Individual charts were rarely kept and were never public; children were often visited in the medical ward for a very brief amount of time; and the doctors rarely knew their names. While I could see the children when I returned to their nursery rooms, I couldn't

remember all of the children I had seen on prior visits. Consequently, many visitors, especially infrequent or short-term visitors came to know and identify the children primarily through their medical conditions, such as “the boy with hydrocephalus” or “the older girl with the heart condition.”

Older children in most of the SWIs lived on upper floors that were not open to visitors. If they were healthy, they went to local school for the day so it was especially difficult to follow-up with them. As a result, volunteers and I got to know children with chronic conditions best – especially if they were in residence at an NGO foster home from whom we received updates and/or could visit freely. However, there was another complication regarding these children. They were frequently given a variety of names. This practice forced me to consider the multiple identities attached to those names and the ways that their names reflected not only the community with whom they expect the child to identify and “belong” but also the hopes and expectations for the child’s future.

The director of the SWI is typically the person who chooses a child’s name. There may be some naming convention in place that reflects the child’s residence and/or peer group. For example, one SWI in which I worked gave all of the children the surname of Fu. Fu means prosperity and good fortune. As Rubie Watson has noted in her study of Chinese naming conventions, gender and personhood, names are often chosen to alter a child’s apparent destiny (2001). It is in the exceptional case of abandoned children, that surnames are chosen. Those who had a different surname had arrived under a different director. Directors, much like Chinese parents may also select a name based on an existing or desired characteristic or experience. For example, one infant girl had arrived as a newborn in mid-December. The name chosen for her was “Winter Jade.” Often, a director will also choose a specific surname for the all of the

children he or she will name – treating them somewhat like surrogate children. Other times, they may select a given surname for a subset of the population, such as all children entering the SWI in the year 2004.

Regardless of the reasoning behind the selection of surname, the children are being named and placed within a cohort grounded in a group identity and symbolized by the surname. As Watson noted, naming begins the process by which "anybodies are converted into somebodies" (2001:167). But for the children living in SWI and subject to the care of many and varied institutions and perhaps eventually transnational adoption, the changing of names is highly symbolic of their shifting positions. One of the primary reasons that it proved difficult to track children in the larger SWIs was that different groups often referred to children by different names. The official record stated the child's legal name, but this often not available. The aunties (ayi) – child care workers in the SWIs who are typically referred to by the familiar term of address of women who would be roughly their mother's age – often had nicknames for the children. These nicknames were usually consistent with the Chinese practice of using "milk names" for infants and young children. These names are often simple and "cute" derivatives of their formal name and might repeat a part of the name. For example, a girl named Meili (beautiful) might be nicknamed Meimei. Nearly all of the NGOs I worked with also gave the children an English or biblical name. This was especially true of groups whose members had little or no exposure to spoken Chinese and also of groups that were fund-raising overseas and sought to create a familiar and accessible image of children in need. For example, one newsletter recently appealed to members on behalf of a baby boy born with an exstrophic bladder (the bladder is outside of the body). Their appeal appeared as follows:

Saving Baby Joey

> I know that many of you are probably constantly bombarded with requests for funds for one project or another but please read Joey's story and see if you feel you can be involved in our attempt to save him….we cannot wait so we will walk in faith

Joey is thus renamed as a sign of "value in relations of exchange that traverse national boundaries," which groups hope will culminate in his "salvation" (Anagnost 2000:408).

Merida and many of the people she worked with were Chinese, so the children in her medical foster home typically maintained their Chinese names. However, the roughly twenty children who were in residence at the Fangjian SWI that had been "adopted" by BICCO were given English names. While this made it easier for non-Chinese volunteers to get to know the children's names, it was difficult at first to be certain which child was which because BICCO used one name, but the SWI staff, of course continued to use their Chinese names. Besides familiarity, there was no doubt that the name also mirrored the group's hopes or expectations that the child would have a new beginning.

For groups with strong Christian affiliation, the name chosen for the child is of particular importance. Names were often biblical in nature and were meant to represent some aspect of their child's life, their coming to the Christian community and ultimately, their eternal salvation. For example, a tragically burned baby was cared for and ultimately adopted by a member of the Philip Hayden Organization. Their website explains his name, Levi, as follows:

> the name "Levi" means "one who unites people together." We are convinced that God is going to use this little guys life to bring many Chinese and American people together. Lisa and John… are planning to adopt Levi. What appeared to be a tragedy has become a beautiful story of redemption and love and reminds us of the scripture which says: *For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to them that love him and are called according to his purposes.* - Romans 8:28

The naming of Levi, as the above description suggests, reflects a complicated understanding of salvation, redemption and rewards and is a very complicated spiritual exchange of sorts where body and soul are bound together. For missionary groups, the salvation of the body reflects salvation of the soul. Thus, a Christian name marks a child's destiny and ultimate return to the Lord.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In "China/U.S. border: adopted children's identities", Sara Dorow states, "adoptive parents mediate their children's histories not only in relation to their Chinese origins but also in anticipation of their American futures" (2004:89). Throughout my research, I too found that the process of naming was profoundly important to new parents and typically reflected their (dis)connection to their child's history, and perceived heritage. For many adoptive parents, names also represent both imagined and real communities – and these representations of identity and community are found within the NGO network in China as well.

Through the ways in which various groups in China and the United States choose names for children, determine eligibility for medical care, and arrange foster and adoption situations, it becomes clear that the notion of "saving" children is not only complex but also incorporates many political ramifications with regard to the material problems faced by abandoned Chinese children. It seems that to different groups, such as SWI directors, and various NGOs, "saving" children (or choosing who to save and why) varies considerably. Moreover, the notion of exactly what children need to be saved from and why is not always clear and reflects the complications inherent in the debate over the "best interests of the child." The groups I have examined in this

chapter may see themselves as committed to saving the soul, the body, saving a child from poverty, and saving children from an institutional upbringing; some groups see all of these as essential and connected.

In her analysis of maternal citizenship in the age of transnational adoption, Ann Anagnost questioned, "How can we turn some of the energy we invest in the nurture of our own children to a more broadly realized program of social activism that transcends the privatized realm of domestic life to enhance the conditions of nurture for all children?" (Anagnost 2000:413). In a variety of ways, the NGOs are part of an emerging "third sector" in China and they attempt to address this question as they work to "save" abandoned Chinese children. While this work is tremendously important in a market economy that has lost much of its state mandated social services (problematic though they may have been) to a very uneven private development, nevertheless, these groups have situated the children with whom they work in a complicated salvation narrative that reflects their broader mission of medical or spiritual salvation but typically overlooks the historical context of neocolonialism and U.S. paternalism that pervade these narratives in China.

6.0 LABOR OR LOVE

> The association of money and children is not a comfortable one. Money is Something impure. It circulates and passes from hand to hand…Money relies on traffic.
>
> - Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan.*

For parents adopting from China, one of the most uncomfortable aspects of the adoption experience is centered around the cost of adoption. All of the parents I have spoken with have been asked the question, "how much did it cost?" by an array of curious observers. In addition, concerns with regard to costs and "buying" children are frequent themes among online discussion groups. In answering these questions, parents often attempt to minimize the appearance of buying and selling children. For example, they will typically itemize and emphasize specific expenses such as travel, agency fees, homestudy fees, and welfare institute donations. Nevertheless, for many, the specter of commodification remains.

Citing the Oxford English Dictionary, Susan Strasser, a historian who examines American consumer culture and market relationships, notes that a popular definition of commodification is "the action of turning something into, or treating some things as a (mere) commodity; the commercialization of an activity, etc., that is not by nature commercial" (2003:3). However, Strasser builds on this simplistic definition by situating commodification within the global capitalist system in which the subordination of goods and services "requires understanding them more for their monetary value than for some intrinsic worth, usefulness, or nonmaterial qualities"

(2003:3). From this perspective, the transnational adoption process between the United States and China prompts the question of how children fit within this global capitalist system of exchange.

There are many reasons why images of commodified Chinese children persist, despite attempts on the part of the Chinese and U.S. governments, adoption agencies, and adoptive parents to ensure that the child is abandoned and in need of adoptive families and to ensure that loving, sincere parents are found for the child. In this chapter, I will explore three key reasons why this specter of commodification continues to pervade popular discourse on transnational adoption.

The first reason why, as I discussed in Chapter 2, is that Americans are often uncomfortable discussing market forces in conjunction with family relationships. In her study of "mail order" marriages between Filipinas and Chinese women, and U.S. men within the context of political economy and the cultural logics of desire, Constable notes that Asian women "rarely objected to the idea that their relationships with U.S. men were related in part to political relations and the global flow of capital. U.S. men, by contrast often objected strongly" (2003:116). Constable argues that it is "important to consider how and why love, romance, and marriage are linked – despite strong American cultural reluctance to burst the fairy tale bubble…to money, class and power" (2003:118).

In her look at transnational desire and "love," Denise Brennan notes how "difficult it is to do research on love because of the 'slippery nature' of emotions" (Brennan 2004:95). Parents adopting transnationally however must resolve this seeming contradiction between their declaration of a parental love that must, given its U.S. middle-class context, be absolute, unconditional, and in no way "slippery." And yet they must negotiate a highly commodified process that consistently reminds parents that their family is constructed via market forces.

Moreover, the ways in which transnational adoptive families are brought together, the very nature of the process of adoption, be it domestic or foreign, represent a disruption of "natural" love and familial affection as biological ties are broken and thus in need of (adoptive) repair.

As Bargach notes in Orphans of Islam: Family, Abandonment and Secret Adoption in Morocco, stories of adoption and abandonment are "the stories of disruptions, clearly offsetting conventional ideas of family, family relations, the bosom of togetherness, ties of love, and being" (Bargach 2000:17). Moreover, as with Constable's informants discussing marriage, families based on "love" are often equated with modernity. Pragmatic concerns or ideas about the value of children and their labor are equated with older family forms in which children in the United States and China were often adopted as a source of labor.

As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, adoptive families are framed within a U.S. legal model of "as-if" biological families. Particularly uncomfortable for adoptive parents therefore, is the discussion of adoption expenses and the possibility that these "expenses" can be equated with buying a child. Adoption expenses are a point of disjuncture with the "as-if" adoption model because biological families do not pay such expenses. However, I argue that though the specific costs of reproduction vary from biological parents to adoptive ones, nevertheless, both types of families employ reproductive labor, and require material resources to build their families. Consequently, the adoption expenses paid by adoptive parents challenge the broader desire of *all* parents to deny the importance of market forces within the family sphere. Ultimately, it is precisely the ways in which adoptive families are economically similar to biological families that leave them open to concerns of commodification.

The second reason why concerns with the commodification of children persist is that the transnational movement of children largely parallels the transnational flow of commodities from

China to the United States and in turn, cash payments from the United States to China. Consequently, stratified systems of production and reproduction are frequently conflated in the popular imagination. This concern was depicted in a July 1, 2006 Mother Goose and Grimm newspaper cartoon that was published nationwide. In the cartoon are two white parents proudly showing off a picture to another white couple with somewhat dubious expressions. The caption reads, "We adopted a baby girl from China. She's 3 now and works at a Nike plant in Beijing." This cartoon makes explicit the ways in which the United States, no longer willing or able to meet its own needs, is turning to China to meet these needs. The uneasy laugh comes as the reader recognizes that the proud parents they were expecting are actually exploiting child labor rather than "saving" a needy child. Another possible interpretation is that the reader instantly recognizes the ways in which adoption closely parallels a global pattern of production in which China is the single largest producer of goods on the U.S. market. In this way, transnational adoption provides an important lens for examining the complex, global relationship between "love and gold." As Hochschild states, "The notion of extracting resources from the Third World in order to enrich the First World is hardly new" but today, love and care are the "new gold" (Hochschild 2002:26). While adoptive parents are criticized for their contributions to a stratified system of reproduction that mirrors both historical and contemporary flows of production, it is Third World children and their caretakers who may pay the price.

The problematic images of commodified children exemplified by the Mother Goose & Grimm cartoon are exacerbated by the ways in which descriptions of both the transnational adoption process and global trade typically utilize economic terms such as "supply" and "demand" to discuss "transactions." For example, in a 2004 article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, adoption lawyer Dawn Davenport writes, "No one is equating babies with commodities,

but the principles of supply and demand apply" (Davenport 2004:11). Economic terms such as "supply" and "demand" can be unsettling when used within a context of presumably altruistic familial love and are contradictory to the broader adoption discourse of love and salvation.

A third factor that helps to explain the specter of commodification that surrounds transnational adoption between the United States and China is that the "production" and nurture of children for transnational adoption is linked to a gendered labor force which, like other forms of gendered "care" work is marginalized as low paid, unskilled labor. In this way, care workers in welfare institutes share much in common with nannies and maids in the global marketplace. However, unlike nannies and maids, care workers in SWIs do not migrate and are thus pulled on a daily basis between the needs of their own families and the demands of their work. Nevertheless, they are key contributors of the reproductive labor that is behind the successful migration of their "product," the transnational adoptee. Although the experiences and (re)productive labor of these often little noticed Chinese women workers have not been addressed in earlier studies of transnational adoption, nevertheless they illustrate much about current global notions of the "work" of caring and perhaps even motherhood itself.

SWI care workers also have much in common with the gendered labor force of the global assembly line. As early as 1983, Hochschild and Fuentes estimated that eighty to ninety percent of the low-skilled assembly jobs in the Third World are held by women and that their work is widely identified as "women's work" regardless of "whether the product is missile parts or Barbie dolls" (1983:12). They argue that despite regional variation, economists have situated this phenomenon with a " 'new international division of labor,' in which the process of production is broken down and the fragments are dispersed to different parts of the world, while control over the overall process and technology remains safely…in 'first world' countries" (1983:6).

Contemporary research continues to focus on this "global gender gap" and, as recently as 2005, the World Economic Forum cites a UNIFEM report that argues that 60 percent of the world's 550 million working poor are women.[48] These issues are clearly embedded within the dark humor of the Mother Goose and Grimm cartoon. The cartoon draws an ironic parallel between the gendered patterns of Third World production for first world consumers and the gendered patterns of China-U.S. transnational adoption.

Transnational adoption may be criticized from the vantage point of the commodification of children and neocolonialist systems of stratified reproduction (e.g. Anagnost 2000; Solinger 2001). While these concerns can be disturbing to parents, adoption agencies and to some scholars, examining transnational adoption from an economic perspective is critical because it furthers an understanding of the situation of individuals participating in this process. In this chapter, I will explore the nature of the global transaction that is a significant part of the transnational adoption process and some of the complications that arise as seemingly competitive concerns such as labor, love, and money intersect. Here I address the process of transnational adoption and the perceived contradiction between love and money at two key points in the process, both of which are mediated by the pivotal role of SWI director: 1) the material conditions facing SWIs and their care workers; and 2) the positioning of children as they circulate and "pass from hand to hand" (Rose 1984:53). Following these two sections, is a discussion of the issues underlying the

[48] On 16 May 2005, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published a report entitled "Women's empowerment: measuring the global gender gap." The WEF is a not-for-profit organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is a consortium of business, intellectual, and government leaders whose mission is centered around "'improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas."' See their website, www.weforum.org for complete details.

seemingly contradictory relationship between "love and gold" that will constitute the remainder of this chapter.[49]

6.1 GLOBAL CARE WORK: AN OVERVIEW

> How did the demanding job of rearing a modern child come to be trivialized as 'baby-sitting?' When did caring for children become a 'labor of love,' smothered under a blanket of sentimentality that hides its economic importance (Crittenden 2001:45).

Wage labor that has been identified as overwhelmingly female and underpaid has a long history within the framework of capitalist development. The struggle to unionize in the United States began in earnest in the United States in the late 19th century and was epitomized by the 1900 founding of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in New York City in 1900. The union ultimately joined with other labor unions and, despite overwhelmingly female membership, remains headed by men. As garment work, like other forms of industry, moved overseas, the union lost much of its influence and is struggling to maintain influence and broaden its membership. Ann Crittenden, a financial writer for *Newsweek* and the *New York Times* and a Pulitzer Prize nominee, writes in her book, The Price of Motherhood, child care workers in the United States have been largely unsuccessful in unionizing because of the low wages generated by child care workers in a capitalist market economy. She cites a May 1, 1996 rally in Washington D.C. that was ineffective and disorganized because workers had been unable to

[49] The phrase "love and gold" is taken from the chapter of the sam name in the edited volume entitled, Global Woman and authored by Arlie Russell Hochschild.

afford the $600 permit for a legal demonstration. In many ways, child care differs from other forms of low-wage gendered labor within the global market place. Notably, it can not be "outsourced" in the way that other kinds of labor can be because it exists to meet the needs of children and parents in a specific locality. While care labor itself does not fit within global flows, I argue that the economic *value* placed on that labor nonetheless has global implications. The development of capitalist market economies, such as those emerging in China, marginalizes this kind of gendered labor and is responsible for their relatively low wages in the same way that Hochschild, and others have argued it is responsible for Third World women laborers migrating to the First World (Massey 1998; Hochschild 2001).

According to the Center for the Child Care Workforce, a project of the American Federation of Teachers (http://ccw.cleverspin.com/index.html), U.S. child care workers receive one of the lowest salaries in the United States.[50] This assertion is backed up by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that ranks the hourly wage of child care workers at $8.32/hour, just slightly higher than that of parking attendants who earn an average of $8.30/hour. Unlike child care workers, parking attendants also receive tips and bonuses. Moreover, since 2002, twelve states have actually seen an overall *decrease* in wages for child care workers. While one might argue that capitalism, unlike other economic systems, does have a particular requirement for "years of hard patient work to mold infants into individuals who have the imagination to find a place for themselves in a competitive, mobile world, the self-confidence to strive, and the self-discipline to plan for an uncertain future," nevertheless, these values are not reflected in the economic conditions facing child care workers or, as Crittenden argues, many mothers (2001:45). In reality,

[50] Here the term child care workers refers to those who are responsible for the education and care of young children, who are not their parents or guardians, and who are not in residence with the family.

"the United States has a child care system in which [m]others care for their own children for free, and child care workers increasingly care for other peoples' children for the lowest wages in the economy. These are the twin pillars of a care system based on the exploitation of women" (Crittenden 2001:203). Because of the contradiction between ideology and economic reality, Crittenden and others contend that the United States is at war with itself.

While Crittenden is addressing the situation of care workers in the United States, I argue that the nature of globalization and emerging markets in "developing countries" have created similar problems beyond the borders of the United States. In the case of China, this exploitation exists because of the contradictions between lingering socialist ideologies that privilege equality of the sexes in lieu of policies that protect women and other marginalized workers in the new global workplace, and dramatic but unevenly distributed increases in wealth and resources.

For Crittenden, a significant problem facing care workers is the way in which their labor has been socially constructed as a "natural" consequence of the nurturing characteristics of women. This essentialist interpretation of "women's work" undermines a view of care work as "professional" and makes it easier to demean the "toughest job you'll ever love" (2001:205). As one activist protested, "I'm not a baby sitter. I never sat on a baby!" (2001:202). In the United States, Crittenden argues that a key component of both improved care work and opportunities for care workers is a sense of professionalism that is fostered through representation (labor unions, trade organizations, activism, etc.), training (certification, etc.), and access to needed resources and equipment. Surprisingly, Crittenden cites the Department of Defense as both the largest and "best" day care provider. Interested in retaining trained professional military personnel, the U.S. Department of Defense has significantly invested in providing high quality care and "treats its

care givers like its soldiers, as skilled professionals who require training and all of the support and equipment they need" (2001:215).

Ultimately, child care and mothering are critical to social and economic success, yet they have been rendered invisible in ways that allow husbands, employers and society as a whole to enjoy a "free ride" on women's unpaid (maternal) and underpaid (child care) labor. This is a condition facing many countries and is particularly relevant to China's rapid development. Crittenden cites a 1995 United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* that concludes that, "[W]omen receive a disproportionately small share of the world's resources…considering the massive amount of work they do" (2001:78). Moreover, the principal author of that 1995 report, Mahbub ul Haq, alleges this is reflective of a conspiracy on a global scale that undervalues women's work and social contributions and concludes that "if women's work were accurately reflected in national statistics it would shatter the myth that men are the main breadwinners of the world" (Crittenden 2001:78).

6.2 MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTES

In this section, I return to a few of the institutions I worked at or visited in order to compare the range of funding they received and the services available to children in residence. These material conditions provide a context within which the labor of SWI care workers can be contextualized. While the Ministry of Civil Affairs provides a fairly standard allowance of spending per child, regional costs and opportunities greatly impact the possibilities facing individual directors. In 2002, the average monthly stipend for a child in residence at an SWI was Y110, approximately $12. This stipend was intended to cover all costs related to the care of the child. These expenses

include: food, clothes, medical costs and education expenses. Even in relatively poorer areas of China, such as Henan province, this can be barely enough to cover the absolute minimum expenses, assuming all is well. If there is a problem, such as a significant medical condition, then the allowance is completely inadequate. In the face of rapidly expanding market reforms, even many modest state mandated welfare programs have dissolved, leaving Chinese people with increasing individual responsibility for covering health, disability and insurance costs. In addition, the cost of living in China has grown exponentially with development. As Jenny Bowen, director of Half the Sky, noted in a fall 2006 newsletter, "Today, the gap between the monies we collect through sponsorships and the actual monies we need to run the programs has grown larger in part because it costs more to do anything in the New China than it did when we began." While many of these costs in other countries may be picked up by employers, the government, or "third sector"[51] funding and organizations, these possibilities are not widely available in China. Consequently, with regard to many social services there remains a vacuum which has yet to be filled.

Like individuals, state-run welfare institutes in China also face problems funding medical and social services. Increasingly, they pursue a range of new sources of funding. For example, the Henan SWI, discussed in Chapter 5, was building a new set of buildings and used lottery proceeds to fund a significant portion of the final construction. In general, SWIs that have been approved by the governing body known as the China Center for Adoption Affairs (CCAA) and that are placing children for transnational adoption, have a great many other sources of funding available. The most obvious source of funding is the $3,000-$5,000 fee paid to the SWI by parents upon

[51] "Third Sector" is a social economy term that refers to a myriad of organizations that fit neither the public nor private sectors. This category would include charities, NGOs and community organizations.

successful completion of the adoption. The details of this transaction will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. Here it is important to note that the stated reason for this fee, known as an "orphanage donation," is to provide funds to the SWI for support of children who are not adopted and to reimburse them for expenses incurred as a result of raising the adoptee (see Appendix for a detailed example of costs from the Holt Agency). Successfully placing children in adoptive families provides an important source of revenue for SWIs that work within the transnational adoption network.

In addition to this direct source of funding from adoptive parents, transnational adoption provides the SWI with additional sources of funding that are somewhat peripheral to the process of adoption itself. For example, the NGOs discussed in Chapter 5 are an important source of funding. Groups such as Half the Sky, are comprised of adoptive families but do not provide services related to adoption itself. Rather, their express mission is to develop projects that help the children "left behind." These types of projects may include: developing preschool programs, building playgrounds, funding for medical procedures, teacher and nanny training sessions, staffing volunteers, and building "family villages" to house children ineligible for adoption.

6.3 A TALE OF TWO SWIS

Perhaps one of the most important reasons for conducting multi-sited research on Chinese SWIs it that this approach renders visible the significant differences between SWIs in terms of their number of residents, available funding, material conditions, etc. The varied conditions at many SWIs reflect the economic development and "success" of different geographic regions. The SWI in Shanghai is particularly interesting in this regard. This SWI is currently one of the largest

SWIs in China. It has the capacity to house 1,000 children, although when I visited in 2003 there were just over 600 in residence. Over 90 percent of the children in residence have special medical needs. The facility reflects the interests of this population in that it has several recreational therapy rooms – one with whirlpools and designed solely for hydro-therapy. The building looks much like a children's hospital in the United States. There are large, bright airy rooms, new cribs with clean, new bedding, and good laundry and maintenance facilities.

In 1996, this SWI had been the place in which the BBC documentary entitled, The Dying Rooms, had been filmed. As I discussed in Chapter 1, this documentary resulted in harsh criticism of the Chinese state run welfare system by many Western observers. There are many possible ways in which the negative attention resulting from this documentary altered the material conditions of the original SWI. First, under great pressure, China invested a considerable amount of money to raise the standards of the SWI to a level deemed suitable of Shanghai, the wealthiest city in China. Second, it inspired many adoptive parents who were, at least in part, motivated by the salvation narratives discussed in Chapter 5. Third, the reconstruction and reopening of this welfare institute allowed it to take advantage of the large expatriate community in Shanghai, Western aid NGOs, and to position itself as a showcase institute. This Shanghai SWI is clearly at a very high end of the economic spectrum but that is consistent with Shanghai's wealth and position in China's economy as the financial center of banking and the Chinese stock exchange.

Although I visited several SWIs that fell at various points on the spectrum of material wealth, the Henan SWI makes for an important comparison to Shanghai. As I discussed in the previous chapter, I visited there on a semi-monthly basis while conducting participant observation with AEHF. At the time of my first visit, the SWI was located in a large traditional courtyard style brick building. The architecture was much like that at Fangjian, except that the buildings

were larger and housed over seventy children. It was also next door to a senior citizens' home. Unlike Fangjian, the Henan SWI was in a rural area and had a large yard between the residence of the children and that of the seniors. Older children were able to visit seniors. Neighbors and other children were also free to come and visit. On the day we were there, volunteers from a local middle school had come by to do yard work and visit.

While there was a fairly strong sense of community that served older children well, there were very limited resources. The building was old, there were no play rooms and only outdoor bathrooms. Several children shared a crib. The bedding was worn and there were no strollers, high chairs or toys. However, as the result of the director's work with central government's Center for Adoption Affairs (CCAA), he was able to place several children through transnational adoption and had established contacts with AEHF and other groups who were interested in providing funding and support. Director Hou proudly showed us the new facility that looked much like a small hospital. The SWI did relocate a few months later and this resulted in some important improvements for residents. For example, the rooms were all within one structure and thus there was no longer any need to go outside to use the bathrooms. In addition, there were improved laundry and cooking facilities, more beds and cribs, and new bedding. The grounds were well kept and had a playground. However, the effect of the new building was problematic because the children were now residents in an institutional setting and no longer in a building that was integrated into the community. Other children could no longer drift in and out to play and visit and the senior citizen's building was not readily accessible. The SWI had gained much but had lost a sense of intimacy and community in the process.

Despite some problems, Director Hou and the staff were pleased with the move. In addition to some material improvements, from their perspective, the building was impressive and

created an aura of prestige and professionalism; it looked like a successful SWI *should* look. From this vantage point, it becomes clear that the building represented a relocation, not just of place but also of identity, in this case one of professionalism that met global standards of modern care. In discussing the importance of this building with the director and staff, I came to understand that they felt their ability to care for the children was legitimized by the construction of this type of building. In this way, the kind of improvements Merida and the Beijing expatriate NGO group (BICCO) had made to Fangjian, discussed in Chapter 5, would have been unsatisfactory to the Henan workers. The changes made by Merida specifically addressed the ways in which the building could be renovated to create a home-like environment as opposed to an impressive institutional structure. Although the larger resident population in the Henan SWI certainly warranted larger spending, they had not prioritized a "home-like" environment. I should qualify here that broader development plans may largely account for the privileging of these kinds of institutions. The staff and director were now proud to show visitors around, expecting that the new building would meet the standards of Western visitors. In this way, this setting had been reconstructed, at least in part, for a particular kind of "tourist gaze" whereby the director and staff very much sought to show adoption travelers a "world that everywhere shows us our own image" (Urry 2002:9). While adoption NGO workers, adoptive parents, and facilitators do not readily fit into conventional categories of "tourists," nevertheless, they do reflect emerging forms of global tourism that occur in unlikely, dangerous and often "dark" destinations such as Alaska, Auschwitz-Birkenau, extinct coal mines, Northern Ireland, and Pearl Harbor (Urry 2002:142). While these tourists are not seeking either the leisure or recreation associated with more traditional forms of tourism, their needs for tourist items and services do constitute a kind of " 'tourism reflexivity', [in which] the set of disciplines, procedures and criteria that enable these

kinds of places to monitor, evaluate and develop its tourism potential within the emerging patterns of global tourism" (Urry 2001:142). The concept of adoption travel is a promising topic for subsequent research.

6.4 CHINESE SWI WORKERS: TO LABOR OR LOVE?

As I have identified, many SWIs place considerable emphasis on the construction of a "modern" institutional facility, but often place less emphasis on the types of organization and behavior that occur within the facility. I argue that this is largely because of development policies which favor large structural changes but fail to fund the kinds of small scale improvements designed to create a more "home-like" environment that some NGOs have helped provide. In addition, the kinds of large scale development projects favored by the Chinese government in general and SWIs in particular, continue to overlook the gendered labor gap and the double burden facing women who need to care for both their own children and work to provide care for others. From this vantage point, it is evident that SWI workers, are a local example of the "global woman" phenomenon. While they will not migrate "globally" the patterns of many who migrate domestically in China from countryside to city are consistent with broader global flows.

This section examines what Hochschild termed the "cultural politics of inequality" (2002:29). This phenomenon of development and globalization refers to the way in which the "low market value of care keeps the status of the women who do it – and, ultimately, all women – low" (2002:29). In short, if children are "priceless," why is the care of children so poorly valued? There are many ways to approach this critical question, but here I would like to focus on the

perceived tension between love and money within the discourse of transnational adoption, a discourse built largely on the salvation narratives discussed in Chapter 5.

Chinese SWI workers fall broadly under the rubric of "child care workers." However, the nature of their work is in many ways markedly different from other types of child care workers because they are caring for resident children and because they often play an ongoing and significant role in rearing a number of children over many years. In the United States, only nannies would have something near the influence on children that SWI workers can have given the absence of parents. However, nannies usually leave the family when the child or children enter school. Even if a nanny stays with the family for many years, her relationship with the child is supervised by the parent or parents and she rarely works in tandem with other child care workers. SWI workers on the other hand, while bounded by the physical constraints of the SWI, can have largely unsupervised relationships with the children in their care. Depending on the size of the SWI, they also work with a large network of staff who provide a variety of services for children.

The ways in which the labor of care work in China is gendered has a particularly contemporary ideology that is intimately connected to the Chinese state expectation of a "revolution within a revolution" (Croll 1997:251). This second revolution refers to the post 1949 Chinese Marxist expectation that women would be liberated as a result of the broader revolution of the masses of exploited workers. The slogan of "women hold up half the sky" was important to a Communist ideology of equality. In addition, Mao and others asserted that "what men can do, women can do too" (Jacka 1997:103). This ideology was especially strong during the years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) when women were sent to the countryside to do physical labor that had long been considered "men's work." However, as Jacka points out, "It has never been

claimed that what women can do (e.g. domestic work) men can do too" (1997:103). Consequently, men rarely applied for jobs associated with "women's work." As Honig and Hershatter argued, the massive changes made in the Deng era resulted in a reemergence of gender divergent ideologies that emphasized that there are some kinds of labor to which women are better suited and others that better suit men (1988). This shift helps to explain why the Women's Federation believes that the "promotion of women's 'natural' dominance in particular areas of work will bring them certain advantages" (Jacka 1997:99).

Citing the ways in which there was a tradition of women engaged in "inside sphere" labor, Jacka describes how the state overlooked the ways in which gendered labor specifically contributed to the subordination of women. For example, the state encouraged girls to pursue kindergarten teaching and care work as a means of economic opportunity and to contribute to a strong socialist society. In addition to encouraging their participation in low status jobs, there were correspondingly lower rates of education for girls and lower rates of political representation for women (Jacka 1997). While the Women's Federation was designed as a branch of the government that could address "women's issues," the Federation was primarily engaged with birth planning policies and was consequently widely resented by the same women it sought to serve. They also lacked the power and resources to directly affect the status of care work. Jacka concludes that in the 1990s, men continued to resist doing "women's work." For example, Education Bureau officials reported in the 1990s that, "boys do not choose kindergarten teacher training courses because if they were to become kindergarten teachers they would be looked down upon" (Jacka 1997:82). Jacka argues, and I agree, that the perception that women are better suited to this kind of work is widely accepted and, in part, accounts for the disproportionate employment rates of women and men in these fields, despite earlier ideologies of equality. In this

way, care work in China and the United States follow a similar gendered logic that reflects an increasingly global pattern of low wages, low status and an ideology that persists in the notion that this type of work is "naturally" performed by women. As Crittenden pointed out with regard to the United States, there is an "illusion that working with small children is an innate predisposition of women, or at least some women, so there is no need to place much value on it" (2001:203). Ultimately, this "dangerous myth" of women naturally seeking childcare work perpetuates both the low pay and low status of care workers (Crittenden 2001:203).

Child care is considered appropriate work for women in the SWIs. To the best of my knowledge, no men were employed as care workers in any of the SWIs in which I worked. There were male administrators, doctors, and maintenance staff, but all of the care work was done by women. Depending on SWI staffing this could mean that a care worker performed a range of tasks similar to that of a mother. Smaller SWIs had staff members who were responsible for feeding and playing with children, doing laundry, and cleaning bathrooms. Cooking was always done by separate staff – either men or women.

The Fangjian SWI provides important insights into the kind of care work performed at small SWIs that do not currently place children for transnational adoption. Fangjian housed roughly fifteen children who ranged in age from infancy to their late teens. Healthy infants who arrived via the police were most often placed in a private Western run group home that was sponsored by the Philip Hayden Foundation. All but one or two of the children in residence at Fangjian required special medical attention. Three older boys between the ages of fifteen and seventeen had cerebral palsy. Caring for these boys was difficult because they had no special equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, handicapped bathrooms, and so forth so women had to lift them. The staff included the director and assistant director (both male), two accountants (both

female), a cook (male) and three *ayis* ("aunties") to care for the children. The ayis were responsible for all of the care of the children with the exception of preparing their meals. There were no disposable diapers or laundry facilities prior to the renovation discussed in Chapter 5, so children had to walk or be carried outside in all kinds of weather in order to use the bathroom.

The ayis also had families of their own nearby with whom they lived. All of the ayis had children and one of their daughters would often come after school to be with her mother and the other children. Unlike global workers, SWI care workers typically must return home to their families in the evenings. However, they are in many ways placed in a situation where they must still choose between caring for their own children or those at the SWI. Fangjian for example, was small and they did not have a third shift of workers who would stay overnight with the children. In order to ensure that the children were cared for, ayis would have had to leave their own children alone overnight and would have received no additional compensation. The average monthly salary of ayis in this region of the country was about Y500/month, or roughly $60/month (very low for this part of the country) and they received no professional training. Their material circumstances made it unrealistic for them to commit themselves voluntarily to provide the additional hours of care the children in Fangjian required. Although they needed the meager income the job provided, they also needed to provide care for their own children.

One of the first projects taken on by BICCO and Merida as they worked to improve conditions in Fangjian was hiring additional support staff that could help with special feedings of infants, education for toddlers and so forth. Merida expressed constant frustration with finding "good" ayis who were committed to identifying the children's needs and addressing them promptly and efficiently. There was a continuous turnover of ayis who either left voluntarily because the work was too demanding or were fired because they were seen as "lazy,"

"unprofessional," or "incompetent."[52] Merida spent a lot of time training ayis in methods of therapeutic play, more effective feeding techniques, and setting up stimulating crafts and games. Merida's concern was that, without supervision, ayis would resort to more familiar and less stimulating styles of childcare. BICCO worked under significant budgetary constraints and felt they could not afford to pay ayis more than the standard pay of Y500/month. In discussing the salary of ayis, Merida was convinced that ayis would not be motivated by higher salaries but rather, their success in this kind of work was linked to a feeling of commitment, and a "spiritual" calling to help needy children. However, she acknowledged that finding these kinds of workers was very difficult. The situation facing childcare workers in SWIs is in sharp contrast to ayis hired by many Western expatriates in China although they draw from similar local populations of women. A critical difference in these ayis, however, is that the ayis placed with expatriate families most often have prior experience and/or some training provided by an agency. They also earn a competitive wage (as high as Y2,000/month plus bonuses) and are perceived to be "professionals."

Within the membership of BICCO, there were different views on appropriate salary ranges and qualifications for ayis who would work on BICCO projects (details on these types of projects are discussed fully in Chapter 5). These views were very often divided along perceived racial and nationality/cultural lines. U.S. and European foreigners were overwhelmingly more inclined to offer higher salaries than overseas Chinese who had returned to China. These returning Chinese were firm in holding to local standards of wages. There were several reasons for this. First, they felt the quality of work did not merit higher pay. Consequently, they did not see raises as

[52] An important subsequent research project will entail a detailed look at the SWI worker's (ayis) perspective on their labor, opportunities, professionalism, employers, and subsequent employment.

incentives but rather as "spoiling" care workers. One of the BICCO volunteers from Taiwan jokingly remarked that Americans would ruin their ability to find affordable workers by offering excessive wages. Second, in some ways, these overseas Chinese BICCO volunteers perceived Chinese childcare workers as likely to compete for scarce resources with the children in their care. For example, one of the Fangjian SWI staff remarked that the SWI children had toys and school items that she could not provide for her own child. Lastly, the overseas Chinese volunteers felt that higher salaries and funding in general was an invitation for greed and corruption on the part of local Chinese. Many Chinese expressed the sentiment that having a feature that readily identifies one as a "foreigner," in this case a white face, makes one particularly vulnerable to price gouging. While BICCO members did express empathy for the limited resources available to local Chinese, their relative poverty also made them vulnerable to allegations of corruption and theft.

In sum, Chinese childcare workers are, on the one hand criticized by many in the adoption process for a lack of "care" and altruism, and are said to be motivated solely by wages. On the other hand, their motives are suspect because they are willing to work for *low* wages; wages that neither the workers, nor their employers consider sufficient to cover the cost of living in contemporary China. In short, from the perspective of many NGO groups and other participants in the transnational adoption process, desired care workers are either professionals who are trained and work for relatively high wages, or altruistic volunteers who are moved by a calling to help children. Within this framework, care workers are perceived to be able to either labor or love, but not both. This persistent perception of a contradiction between love and money is troubling for both care workers and the children in their charge because the health and well-being of children are intimately connected to the women who care for them (Ware 1982). While this

most often refers to biological mothers, in the case of children in residence in Chinese SWIs, this critical role is most closely aligned with the *ayi*, or SWI care worker whose labor is caring for children. These ayis are positioned in a way that highlights both a need for a living wage and material circumstances and training which enable basic "care" to be perceived as loving and meaningful. As Hochschild concludes, "there is no reason why every society should not enjoy…loving paid child care" (2001:30).

6.5 EXCHANGING CHILDREN

Another important tension between love and money involves the placement of the child at various points in the adoption process. There are several points throughout the process where the status of the child may be called into question and may be framed as either a source of love and affection, or a source of revenue or income. Here I would like to address two ways in which children are "exchanged" that contribute to problematic intersections of love and money. First, in contemporary China, there is a serious concern with what is perceived to be rampant corruption, especially on the part of officials. Adoption in general becomes suspect as images of children being "bought" surface in adoption networks and newspaper accounts. As those images become more pervasive, and stories of child trafficking increase, it becomes of great concern that "facilitators" are responding to a new "market" for children rather than simply placing needy children with loving available families.

U.S. parents, governments, regulatory agencies, adoption agencies, adoption support groups and others involved in the transnational adoption process are consistently resistant to the possibility of children being commodified as part of the process. In fact, due to concerns of baby-

selling, bribery and other blatant forms of commodification, in the 1990s both Romania and Korea instituted moratoriums on transnational adoptions. As recently as 2003, Vietnam also shut down its international adoption process because of corruption concerns. While the large numbers of abandoned children living in welfare institutes in the 1990s provided parents, agencies and governments with a degree of assurance that adoptions arranged with China were for legally abandoned children, early in 2006, China temporarily suspend adoptions from some counties in Hunan province. At that time, there was extensive evidence that officials from several SWIs had cooperated in a baby smuggling ring. *China Daily* reported the problem with local orphanage directors and workers that resulted in the arrests of fifty suspects and concerns about the legal abandonment status of one-hundred infants. Ultimately, the case resulted in three convictions of fifteen years each and six convictions ranging from three to thirteen years. In addition, twenty officials were fired. While there was some concern that counties in Guangdong and Guangxi provinces had also participated, there were no arrests in those areas. This story quickly received international attention and was reported by the *Washington Post* in March of 2006 in an article entitled, "Stealing Babies for Adoption." Not only did this story receive a great deal of attention within the adoption community, but it also contributed to growing criticism of transnational adoption as inherently exploitive.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, adoptive parents are confronted with "the weight they are throwing around" (Solinger 2001) when they arrive in China and are faced with direct questions about money and resources. Increasingly, local Chinese have also expressed concern about the motives of adoptive parents and the welfare of children once they arrive in the United States. In 2001, the Pittsburgh chapter of FCC cooperated with a Chinese documentary filmmaker who was interviewing legitimate adoptive families to allay concerns in China.

The second factor that heightens the appearance of commodification is the specific way in which the SWI and director relinquish custody of the child into the hands of the parent. While some agencies, such as Holt International, provide a processing service to adoptive parents, many agencies require that parents assume responsibility for the final financial transaction of $3,000-$5,000 in cash. Parents who I traveled with were extremely anxious about traveling to China with such a large amount of cash due in part to obvious concerns of theft and loss. Although parents were in general comfortable with payment to the SWI for services rendered, the anxiety with regard to the money was indicative of their anxiety regarding the receipt of the child. It may have been possible that, in the event of theft or loss, arrangements could have been made to continue the adoption. However, this was not stated. The impression on the part of parents I worked with was essentially, as one parent said, "no money, no child" (personal conversation). This relationship is widely acknowledged throughout the process as well. For example, one informant, Muriel, was experiencing a relatively long delay and her sister remarked that she didn't really understand Muriel's distress because, "After all, its not that she won't get a baby. As long as you pay the money you get a baby, right?" From this vantage point, perhaps part of the parents' anxiety is related to an exchange that could be framed as an exchange of cash for a child. Ann Anagnost notes,

> The anxiety that the child might be a commodity is aroused by the incontrovertible fact that as the child moves from one site of nurture to another, money has to change hands; agencies are established, 'baby flights' chartered, and tour packages assembled. This awareness often takes the form of a refusal and resignification of the meaning of monetary exchanges(Anagnost 2000:398-9).

However, what Anagnost seems to miss is the literal handing over of the money for the child. In our case, parents arrived at a hotel where children and SWI representatives were already waiting. Each set of parents was brought into the room of the adoption facilitators to meet the SWI

representative and their child. The entire exchange lasted roughly five to ten minutes and involved the completion of paperwork and the actual handover of three thousand U.S. dollars to the SWI representative (typically the SWI director), and the final handover of the child to their new family. The resulting effect was much like that of a “cash on delivery” exchange, though of course, concerns over money were quickly brushed aside as parents turned their attention to their new children.

6.6 CONCLUSION

"Made in China"

> Hi. Anyone know how to spell out in pinion [sic], "Made in China?" My daughter wants it on her shirt. She's 8 tomorrow! Home since 6/99. – email from adoptive mother

This chapter has been concerned with the ways in which “political economy is implicated in the production and reproduction of desire and is implicated in even the most minute and intimate levels of interaction” (Constable 2003:143). I have argued that U.S. parents’ discomfort with associating families and markets, the parallels between global flows of commodities and the migration of adopted children, and the gendered patterns of labor in production (embodied by global assembly line workers) and reproduction (embodied by global care workers) help to explain persistent notions of commodification.

Ann Anagnost notes that it is not necessary to “critique adoptive parents but to have their more explicit practices aid us in thinking about issues of race and class more broadly” (Anagnost

2000:390). I argue that adoptive parents can also explicate the relationship of all contemporary families to market forces. While the adoption process is frequently criticized as stratified, and commodified because of the ways in which children "made in China" travel to the United States as "money passes from hand to hand" (Rose 1984), this process is in many ways modeled on an "as-if" biological model. In this way, it becomes clear that the construction of *all* families require that money change hands.

Increasingly, parents are addressing notions of loss experienced by children, especially with regard to their biological mothers. Children's books such as *Mommy Far, Mommy Near*, are designed to help children articulate their curiosity and longing for the mother who carried them, gave birth to them and very often, abandoned them. If the child was placed with Chinese foster parents, U.S. parents may work to maintain some connection to that relationship. However, many parents are still reluctant to see the other ways in which adoption may contribute to commodified images of children and problematic gendered patterns of care work that make it possible for them to adopt. As the above email from an adoptive parent illustrates, parents may embrace or laugh about the ways in which their child was "made in China" but it remains to be seen how grown Chinese children will contextualize the ways in which they were "exported" to the United States.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 AFTERWORD

The U.S. itself has no shortage of babies in need of adoption, but the great majority of them are black while demand is greater for white babies. Supply and demand, likewise, is behind China's tougher rules. As the economy booms, fewer parents abandon their children due to poverty. A traditional preference for boys appears to be waning, so fewer girls are put up for adoption. The result is that 'the number of kids available for international adoption is naturally declining,' says Sun Wencan, who runs the adoption department of the Social Welfare Division of China's Ministry of Civil Affairs (Geoffrey Fowler - Wall Street Journal December 20, 2006).

In December of 2006, the China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA) announced that new tighter regulations for foreign adoptions will be enacted as of May 1, 2007. These regulations include: 1) no single applicants; 2) both parents must be between the ages of 30 and 50; 3) no obese, blind, or deaf applicants;[53] 4) family assets must exceed $80,000; 5) no homosexual

[53] Obesity is defined here as an individual with a body mass index (BMI) greater than forty.

applicants; and 6) no applicants with mental illness, including treatment for depression and anxiety within the last two years. While many people in the adoption community in the United States perceive these new regulations as extreme, they are actually in line with standards set by other nations which place large numbers of children through transnational adoption. For example, as the Wall Street Journal points out, South Korea's weight limit is stricter than China's. Moreover, if the United States proceeds with plans to implement the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption by 2007, prospective U.S. adoptive parents will face additional restrictions, and likely increased costs and delays. The primary restriction facing parents is that they must now choose a provider that has been approved by a central, national accrediting agency that will be overseen by the United States Department of State.[54]

This recent Chinese shift in foreign adoption policies is tied to several key points of this dissertation. I have argued that the phenomenon of transnational adoption has resulted in an emerging global standard for enforcing adoption practices, and that, as these policy changes indicate, China is increasingly working within this standard. I have also argued that this emerging standard and the circumstances surrounding adoption and abandonment in China are intimately connected with the global market. Consequently, children and the transnational adoption process are typically discussed by many scholars, journalists, and adoption facilitators, in economic terms, such as supply and demand, that create a specter of commodification. In contrast to much existing scholarship on transnational adoption and child abandonment (e.g. Johnson 1998; Evans 2000;

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[54] "In the summer of 2006, the U.S. Department [of State] designated two accrediting entities to perform accrediting functions – the Council on Accreditation (COA) and the Colorado Department of Human Services…The accreditation regulations published in February of 2006 are designed to ensure that U.S. adoption agencies perform their duties in a manner that is consistent with the Convention and the IAA," the Intercountry Adoption Act passed by Congress in 2000. See the Department of State website: //travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention_462.html.

Greenhalgh 2003), my research also indicates that the traditional preference for boys is waning, that the population of healthy girls abandoned by their families has stabilized and that the number of children available for transnational adoption is no longer increasing in many regions of the country. Here, I will address these research findings in detail, within the context of the new Chinese policy changes and related media coverage which shed considerable light on popular perceptions and the process of transnational adoption as it stands in early 2007.

Zelizer described the ways in which childhood and the "value" of children has changed in the United States since the 1930s (1985). While children had been adopted earlier, they were often adopted as additional laborers for the family and had a direct economic "use" to the families. Since the 1930s, a sentimentalized value of children has replaced the earlier economic model. As Ragone and others have noted, contemporary U.S. notions of family remain rooted in conceptions of altruistic love and care (1997). Nevertheless, U.S. adoptive families are consistently confronted with the specter of commodification. This dissertation has pointed to various ways in which the perceived tension between love and money lies embedded in the process, language, and perception of transnational adoption.

As I have argued, adoptive families are formed as parents travel to China and complete the adoption process. In traveling with my informant, Liz, and her companions, I came to see the ways in which they were confronted with the "costs" of adoption on several levels. First, was the widespread association of abandoned children in China with China's birth planning and development policies. Arguably, transnational adoption would not have been viable if not for China's 1978 economic policies. Second, parents arriving in China, especially those arriving for the first time, must confront the disparity between U.S. and Chinese incomes. As we traveled, they spoke with local Chinese through translators (myself included) and came to understand

Chinese perceptions of xingfu or (good fortune) that included not just the good fortune of abandoned children finding parents, but also the good fortune found in the dramatic increase in material resources that these newly adopted children would experience upon returning to the United States. For many parents, the multiple Chinese meanings associated with *xingfu* are uncomfortably pragmatic references to their family and money. Third, parents must address language and perceptions that carry connotations of "purchasing" children. For example, Liz and others were asked in China, "How much did she cost?" In response, parents seek ways in which to discuss the costs of adoption as opposed to the costs of a child.

7.2 CONSPICUOUS FAMILIES AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

For new adoptive families, eager to have "normal" lives, the perceived economic foundation of their family is frequently called into question because they are "conspicuous" families in which the parents are typically white and the child either Asian or Hispanic.[55] As transnational adoptive families return to the United States, they are encouraged by their agencies and others in the adoption industry to explore ways in which their perceived cultural and "racial" difference can be incorporated into the family. In this way, Chinese-U.S. transnational families are drawing upon the scholarly insights and personal experiences of earlier waves of Korean-U.S. transnational families, who largely chose assimiliationist models of the family in which cultural difference was ignored in favor of "mainstream" U.S. culture. As Korean adoptees have matured, they have addressed the ways in which they were sometimes made to feel ashamed of their

[55] This term is used in adoption groups to refer to families that "stick out" due to perceived racial difference.

heritage or felt their Korean heritage was downplayed to teach them that they were no different than anyone else. This left some children with the feeling that they were or should be "as good as white." Over the last ten years, adult Korean adoptees are returning "home" on heritage tours to Korea. As Eleana Kim explains, this has resulted in a complicated relationship between the Korean state, which views adoptees as part of the global Korean "family" and as a productive link to the global economy, and adult adoptees who typically seek a more personal experience and do not necessarily feel a nationalistic tie to their "homeland."

While Chinese adoptees are still too young to address some of these concerns themselves, nevertheless, the importance of the formation of a cultural identity is a high priority within the community of transnational adoptive families. In light of the perceived inadequacies in assimilationist models of adjustment that were employed with earlier waves of Korean adoptees, groups such as Families with Children from China (FCC) have formed to consciously create a community of "adopted Chinese daughters." In addition, parents are encouraged to buy dolls with Asian features and many celebrate "Gotcha Days" that commemorate the day that parents and their children first met. While some parents argue that this term is overly simplistic and cute, others have embraced the celebration as a type of "(re)birthday" in which "forever families" are created and their destined match, symbolized by the red thread, is made.

However, like the bittersweet imagery of the red thread in China, many images, souvenir, and cultural practices are reinterpreted in the context of transnational adoptive families, particularly as they are filtered through the lens of white middle-class parents. This process of interpretation that accommodates the tension between "where you are from" (China) and "where you are at" (United States) results in hybrid cultural forms that many argue constitute a kind of "third space" that is neither here nor there. The notion of "third space" can be a useful tool for

understanding these images and imaginings as wholly new and potentially powerful. Moreover, adoption culture may actually constitute a kind of "fourth" space that may be a source of great satisfaction and even subversion to adult adoptees and also a site in which the State may seek to realign its influence.

7.3 ASIAN FEMININITY

While adoptive parents returning to the United States are grappling with ways to address personal questions that arise as people respond to their transracial family, perceived categories of race permeate other aspects of the adoption process as well, Notions of race interact intimately with social constructs of gender. In particular, ideas of Chinese girls and "Lost Daughters" are reflected in commodified U.S. and Chinese images of Asian femininity. Parents processing their adoption paperwork in Guangzhou are interested in purchasing adoption Barbie dolls, and *qipao* (traditional Chinese dresses) as souvenirs of the experience. These kinds of souvenirs place a particular emphasis on cuteness and adorability that constitutes a kind of "packaging" of the adoption experience and helps to emphasize the appeal of Chinese girls as "ideal" daughters and citizens.

The experiences and perceptions of these adopted daughters stand in stark contrast to the those of two of their peer groups: boys abandoned in China and children in the United States who are available for adoption (and are largely African-American). By comparing and contrasting the situations of these different groups of children it becomes apparent that the adoption of large numbers of Chinese girls by parents in the United States has obscured the population of abandoned special needs children and boys in China. Moreover, as Sun Wencan (quoted in Wall

Street Journal at the start of this chapter) states, the Chinese government argues there is some evidence that numbers of healthy abandoned girls may be declining. While there are several factors that can account for this change (notably sex selective abortion), there is ethnographic evidence from some recent studies that the preference for sons is waning (Cohen 2003; Johnson 2004), at least in urban areas. My interviews with SWI directors, Chinese government officials and two years of observations at four SWIs in different regions of China support recent claims that the numbers of healthy infants are declining in many regions of the country. An April 2007 email newsletter from the director of Half the Sky also supports this assertion. Here, HTS Director, Jenny Bowen writes,

> One of the things you might have heard discussion about in recent months is that the numbers of healthy infants in welfare institutions is decreasing. Happily, this is true. We are seeing fewer healthy babies at many (but not all) of our sites. Unfortunately, the number of children with special needs seems to be steadily climbing. We have received applications for Family Villages for SN children from Chongqing, Wuzhou, Haikou and Yiyang.

While much of this evidence is anecdotal, it is coming from several disparate sources and serves as a strong basis for continued research, especially with regard to demographic and population studies and census. As transnational adoption is increasingly seen in China as an advantageous option in placing legally abandoned children, many argue that boys should also be able to take advantage of this opportunity.

7.4 RACED IMAGES

> American Black orphan babies, if you want to compete in the global adoption market, nap time's over. Larry Wilmore, *The Daily Show*, November 6, 2006

The rise in Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption is also intimately connected to the racial politics of domestic U.S. adoption. In tandem with the problematic language linking adoption to global trade, populations of children can be seen as in competition with each other. In the past, the domestic adoption of black U.S. children was widely discouraged by social workers and adoption facilitators because of U.S. racial politics. Begun, with a 1972 statement by the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) who viewed the this type of transracial adoption as "an expedient for white folk, not as an altruistic humane concern for black children," there has been little transracial adoption between white U.S. parents and black children. See Robert H. Bremner, Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History, Vol. 3, *Parts 1-4* (Harvard University Press, 1974):777-780 for the complete statement. Currently, the NABSW affirms its stand against transracial adoption but they oppose the practice largely because of perceived discrimination against black families in the adoption process and concerns regarding cultural and racial identity formation. While studies indicate that most Americans do not favor this position (Simon and Altstein 2000) current media images responding to Chinese policy changes (effective in May 2007) and two highly publicized transnational adoptions of African children by celebrity couples highlight both the commodification of children and simplistic notions of race in the United States. One child was adopted by Madonna and her husband, Guy Ritchie and the other by Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. The adoption by Madonna and Guy Ritchie was particularly controversial because of allegations that they had circumvented standard procedures and had pressured the birth father to give up his rights to the child.

The Daily Show, a popular political satire on cable television, recently featured a segment on "orphan outsourcing" that mocked the perceived economics of transnational adoption. The program's "Senior Black Correspondent" Larry Wilmore exhorted African-American orphans to

“get in the game” by being cuter, smarter and available for less money. He compared African-American “orphans” to U.S. laborers who are in competition with overseas outsourced laborers. In addition, A January 5, 2007 CNN panel discussion on problems of racism in America illustrates the ways in which transnational adoption is popularly perceived as a process that is highly advantageous to children, but a process that has arisen as the result of racism on the part of white parents, and a type of discrimination against African-American children. The CNN discussion, like so many others addressed throughout this dissertation conceive of children in market terms such as supply and demand. This has the unfortunate effect of obscuring the important procedural differences between domestic U.S. adoption and Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption. It also obscures the complicated history of U.S. racial politics that has deeply effected choices made by U.S. adoptive parents. The perception that this type of adoption is advantageous to children, and the use of supply and demand terminology to describe children eligible for adoption, combined with wider concerns about outsourcing and trade deficits, fuel the extensive popular – both serious and comic – perceptions of children in competition with each other for “resources” (e.g. wealthy U.S. parents).

7.5 INTERSECTIONS

In addition to notions of race, intersecting notions of gender and citizenship are key factors in the process of transnational adoption. One oversight in much of the scholarship on either child abandonment in China or the adoption of Chinese children in the United States is that it typically focuses either on the situation of children in their homeland or parents in the United States. Some important exceptions discussed in this dissertation are Sara Dorow’s book, Transnational

Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship (2006), and in the anthology, Cultures of Transnational Adoption (2005), edited by Toby Volkman These transnational perspectives on critical sites of border crossing illustrate the ways in which contemporary forms of intercountry adoption are particularly transformative and do not fit within earlier unidirectional models of migration and change.

Here I would like to briefly discuss Dorow's book in particular because it is not addressed in detail elsewhere in this dissertation because it was published shortly after the draft of this dissertation was completed. Dorow's book is an important and valuable contribution to the literature on transnational adoption. Dorow has covered the "paths of the adoption process" the discourses and institutions that prepares both American adoptive parents and Chinese children for the transnational process. She explores the nature of this form of immigration and the importance of border crossings, especially with regard to Guangzhou – the city in China in which all U.S. adoptions are processed. Dorow pays particular attention to the shops and experiences on Shamian Island, the area in which the U.S. consulate was located and which I addressed in Chapter 2. It will be interesting to see how this sense of "border crossing" changes with the move of the U.S. consulate to a new and less isolated part of the city.

Within the adoption process, Dorow pays particular attention to the ways in which agency are constantly juggling "of what's the best needs of the family, and the best needs of the child" (2006:85). Although the book follows the steps of adoption, importantly, she argues that preadoptive and postadoptive narratives are integrated and embodied in the child; one does not end where the other begins. The body of the child is also important in other key ways, notably as a tangible sign of a gift between nations in which "adoption is read as creating positive relations between nations and cultures that might otherwise be rightly suspected of reproducing a global

order of nations" (2006:127). In this way, adoptees are envisioned as "little ambassadors" who are a gift from one nation to another.

Her discussion of gifts extends to other aspects of this kind of adoption as well as she states, "The potential for adoption to become a commodified transaction or an endless cylce of reciprocal relations is further warded off by the giving of other kinds of gifts. The U.S. $3,000 orphanage donation…is the most obvious example" (2006:140). However, while I agree that the notion of gift exchange pervades much of adoption discourse and ideology, as I discussed in Chapter 6, this exchange is problematic because of the ways in which it is often constructed more as a payment than a gift and thus in many cases, actually undercuts the ideology of "donation" or "gift."

The last two chapters of Dorow's book deal largely with addressing intersections of gender and race as parents look at what they know about the abandonment of children, what they tell their children about abandonment and their imaginings concerning the birth mother. As she notes, the "million dollar question for some parents is what to say about a mother's love" (2006:186). Her discussion of origin narratives is critical because it highlights the ways in which these narratives

> must make sense of where an adopted child came from and where she ends up [and thus] expose the contradictions inherent in the universalizing notion of moetherhood and its permanent imprint on identity. Origin narratives seem to require a particularizing of Other mothers that must somehow, simultaneously, not particularize motherhood itself (2006:187).

In looking at intersections of gender, race and heteronormativity, Dorow draws on many images that have come to signify the adoption process between China and the United States. She looks at dolls such as the "adoption" Barbie that may equate female with blonde and beautiful, and Mulan who may provide children with a stronger racial identity while also providing parents

with an opportunity to discuss Chinese preference for boys. Dorow further argues that these intersections often reflect a variety of "ghosts" (e.g. racial difference, adoption, birth families, abandonment, Chinese and black children not adopted, parents and caregivers unable to adopt) which haunt parents and children in U.S. society (2006:262).

Ultimately, this dissertation builds on literature, such as Dorow's by arguing that a multisited approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of adoption, identity formation, and also labor and relief work in both China and the United States.

7.6 SALVATION

As I have argued, an important concept in the transnational process of adoption, is the notion of salvation narratives. These types of narratives have often been a part of the adoption process. However, these narratives, within the context of Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption, are unique because of the ways in which Western NGOs are working in China to improve the lives of Chinese "orphans." Concurrent with the rise in Chinese-U.S. transnational adoption since the mid 1990s, has been a rise in NGOs that address the needs of children who "wait" in China for adoptive families. Based on their membership, I have categorized the NGOs into three primary categories: adoption, expatriate and overseas Chinese, and missionaries. Looking at these three types of NGOs is critical to understanding the ways in which different groups in this emerging "third sector" utilize capitalist, nationalist and religious ideologies to justify their group's role in "saving" children by simultaneously improving the material conditions of children in China, and improving the economic and spiritual "health" of the nation.

My work with these NGOs shed considerable insight into the different ways in which various participants in the adoption process envision "care" and "salvation." In the case of Fu Meili, a then eighteen month old infant from Henan province with severe facial scarring that required extensive plastic surgery, it became clear that U.S. doctors had expectations with regard to "treatable" disabilities that differed from those of the Chinese caregivers. In Meili's case, Chinese caregivers did not present her to the U.S. doctors because they expected that treating her would only address cosmetic issues but would not resolve the scarring in such a way as to render her viable for adoption. Their analysis of her situation was largely accurate, however, U.S. doctors had different priorities. From their perspective, her initial surgery was relatively routine, inexpensive and readily available. Consequently, from their vantage point, Meili became a prime candidate for surgery. They were less concerned with her viability for adoption as their emphasis was on saving lives and healing bodies.

From this vantage point, it becomes clear that the material "missions" of many NGOs are complicated by broader ideologies that may be interpreted in a neocolonialist and paternalistic light that can reinforce stereotypes of transnational adoption as part of a broader system of stratified (re)production.

7.7 LABOR OR LOVE

Closely related to the perceptions of a global system of stratified reproduction, are notions of neocolonialist global systems of stratified production. Given the problematic market terminology surrounding transnational adoption, it becomes evident that popular and sometimes scholarly perceptions both from within and outside the adoption community contribute to a persistent

specter of commodification that pervades perceptions of the adoption process. I argue there are three critical factors associated with the process that exacerbate a specter of commodification: 1) Americans are widely acknowledged to be uncomfortable with the notion of market forces with regard to family formation; 2) the transnational migration of adopted children largely parallels the flow of commodities and money between the United States and China; and 3) the "production" and nurture of abandoned children in China is based on a labor force that is overwhelmingly female.

First, American ideology of the family largely holds that parental love should be wholly altruistic and moreover, should act as a stronghold against state and market forces. Although this notion is largely linked to middle-class privilege, it is central to the ideology of transnational adoption because adopters are overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Consequently, as I traveled with adopting parents throughout China, they were forced to scramble for answers to questions about money and adoption costs that were posed by local Chinese who were more likely to see the family as an economic and political entity. From the vantage point of U.S. parents however, these frank questions about money and the family were sometimes understood questions about "buying" children as opposed to paying for services rendered.

The ways in which the flow of children from China to the United States parallels the flow of commodities and money between the two nations, exacerbates this specter of commodification of children. Slogans utilized by some in the adoption "market," such as "made in China" consciously draw on this parallel even as they repackage the message in a more cute and family friendly form. While most parents are persistent in the notion that their families are "as –if" they were biologically formed and thus "natural" families, the daunting use of market metaphors in

U.S. society leaves little room for language about adoption that does not call upon market imagery, the supply and demand (of children), and so forth.

Lastly, care labor that is the basis for preparing children for transnational adoption (and for children who remain behind in China), mirrors that of productive labor. This is a highly gendered labor force that is marginalized as low paid and unskilled labor – much like the female laborers associated with both the global assembly line and other labors by "global women" such as nannies and maids. Moreover, this labor force is largely "invisible" to parents, adoption agencies and popular and scholarly accounts of the transnational adoption process. This "cultural politics of inequality," in which the low market value of care within the context of contemporary globalization and development, keeps the status of women who do the work low (Hochschild 2005).

In conclusion, there are many ways, "conspicuous" adoptive families are often singled out as highly visible examples of commodified families and transnational adoption is critiqued as contributing greatly to systems of stratified (re)production and global inequity. However, ultimately, these "as-if biological" families illustrate the ways in which all families in late 21st century capitalism fit within these broader structures, and global institutions.

APPENDIX

Breakdown of cost from the Holt agency (**http://www.holtintl.org/adoption/fees.shtml**)

An Overview of Holt's Fees Effective January 2006		
Fee	**Cost**	**When Due**
Application	$200	With Application
Adoption Study	$1,682-$3,066 (If Holt Provides)	Before Study Begins
Dossier Fee	$2,795	See Below
Adoption Program	$5,324-$15,965*	Acceptance of assignment
Travel for an escorted child	$2,000 - $4,100	Acceptance of assignment
Postplacement	$801 - $1,512 (If Holt Provides)	Acceptance of assignment
Document Processing Service	$500 (optional-for China)	See Below

Other Expenses to Anticipate

You will have some additional expenses which are paid to various service providers. Including:

- Obtaining copies of legal documents
- Finger printing
- Visa filing fee
- Medical exams
- Travel expenses
- Phone calls to Holt
- Postage
- Legal adoption

Application Fee $200

The **nonrefundable** application fee must accompany your application form. This fee covers the cost of reviewing your application and determining how Holt should proceed with your adoption process.

Adoption Study Fee $1,682-$3,066 (If Holt Provides)

This is also called a homestudy. A qualified, experienced social worker will work with you to provide information about adopting and to evaluate your ability to parent an adopted child. The social worker is your advocate and important partner in preparing you for adoption. If you live in a Holt branch office state (Arkansas, California, Iowa, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon or South Dakota), Holt will provide the adoption study. Payment for the adoption study is due before the first meeting. If you live in another state, your

adoption study will be provided and billed by a Holt cooperating agency in your area.

Dossier Fee $2,795

Applies to all international adoptions except Korea. It includes facilitating your adoption with agency and government officials in the United States and abroad, coordinating services with your local social worker, administrative/office expenses and telephone expenses. You will be billed when Holt receives and approves your homestudy. (*This fee is non-refundable if you withdraw.*)

Document Processing Fee $500

This is an ***optional*** service available to families adopting from ***China***. Holt staff will assist in obtaining vital records needed for your dossier and have the documents certified as required by the county, state, federal and foreign governments. They will also make the necessary photocopies and mount photographs that are part of your dossier. The fee for this service is $500. Families are responsible for the fees charged by the government offices that certify the documents and the cost of Federal Express and priority mail service.

Adoption Program Fee $5,324-$15,965

There are costs involved in facilitating an adoption. These include: background investigations of the child, social services, accepting legal responsibility for the child, liaison with government and agency authorities, legal fees, passport, and U.S. visa fees in the child's country.

Holt also provides direct support to children and orphanages, as well as overseas staff who assist adoptive families who travel to adopt their child.

This fee is due when you accept the assignment of a child. Fees for adopting older children or children with moderate to major special needs may be as low as **$5,324** and are determined on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the country, fees for adopting healthy or minor special needs children are as follows:

Country	Fee	Country	Fee	Country	Fee
Bulgaria	$13,390	China	$9,360**	Ecuador	$8,690
Guatemala	$10,190	India	Please contact Holt for more information	Korea	$15,965
Mongolia	$9,360	Philippines	$8,190	Haiti	$8,690
Thailand	$8,190	Vietnam	$10,325		

**Please note that the Orphanage Donation for families adopting from China is included in the Adoption Program Fee. Holt does not require or recommend that adoptive parents carry large amounts of money to China for payment of adoption fees.

Transportation Fee $2,000 - $4,100

Countries have various requirements or options regarding bringing children to the United States. Some children may be escorted to the United States by staff, volunteers and child welfare authorities. In other cases parents go to the country to receive their child. Parents who travel make their own travel arrangements with Holt's guidance. Costs are higher for children over 12 years old.

Postplacement Fee $801 - $1,512 (if provided by Holt)

There will be follow-up visits with your social worker and reports for the overseas office. This is required by foreign countries and offers families an opportunity to receive support while the child and family are adjusting to each other. The same agency provides both the adoption study and postplacement services.

Fee Reductions

Fees are reduced in the following situations.

- The Adoption Program fee is reduced based on a variety of factors: medical needs, age or part of a large sibling group. Adjustments are made at the time of child assignment.
- In exceptional circumstances, when a child is waiting for a family and the family needs financial assistance to adopt that child, Holt has a Special Needs Adoption Fund. Request for Special Needs Adoption Funds are considered on a case by case basis at the time of assignment.

Fee Refunds

Occasionally, special circumstances lead to a family withdrawing from the adoption process before the child arrives home. Holt refunds fees based on the following circumstances:

Circumstance	Fee	Percent of Refund
Family cancels; withdraws after accepting child assignment	Dossier Fee	0%
	Adoption Program Fee	50%
	Travel for an escorted child	100%
Overseas agency cancels assignment after family accepts child	Dossier Fee	0%
	Adoption Program Fee	100%
	Travel for an escorted child	100%

8.0

9.0 FCC Estimated Costs of Adopting From China

Expenses Before Dossier to China	**Low Cost Estimate**	**High Cost Estimate**
Adoption Agency Fee (Including Home Study)	$5,000	$10,000
Dossier Preparation Expenses	$1,000	$3,000
Costs for the Adoption Trip to China		
Plane Tickets, Hotels, Meals etc	$3,000	$6,000
Required Donation to Orphanage	$3,000	$3,500
Other Legal Fees	$3,000	$4,000
Total Estimated Costs:	**$15,000**	**$25,000**

URL: http://fwcc.org/costs.htm

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